

THE UK'S BIGGEST UNOFFICIAL NINTENDO MAG!
NGC
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EPENDENT NINTENDO G
WARIO WORLD
REVIEWED! As good as Mario? Get the skinny inside!
MARIO KART
14 HOT NEW SHOTS OF MARIO'S LATEST RACER!
DROKK!
JUDGE DREDD
THE HARDEST COPPER EVER COMES TO THE GAMECUBE – AND HE'S LOOKING BRILLIANT!
EXCLUSIVE!
STAR WARS ROGUE SQUADRON III
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GET LINKED

Gamecube is brilliant, and we love Nintendo. This is fact. There aren't enough letters in the English alphabet to be able to construct a word that gets anywhere near to demonstrating how much we love Nintendo. And it's because we love them so much that we worry about them sometimes. F'rinstance, is connectivity really the way forward? Linking your GBA and Gamecube is a great idea in theory (just look at the *Wind Waker* connection bonus – it's magnificent), but it's an expensive function given all the kit you need. And, therefore, not a must-have thing. But it appears to be Nintendo's main strategy as we move towards the back end of 2003. Our old chum Tim Weaver takes a look at the whole thing in his Connected! feature on page 100 – so have a look and see whether you think it's a worthwhile exercise.

WAH!

How many times have Nintendo released a game over here before both Japan AND America? Never! (Possibly. Anyone know?) But that's what they've done with *Wario World*. And what a treat it is, coming from *Ikaruga*-men Treasure, one of Planet Earth's most respected developers. Good, clean, simple, violent fun.

ITB 2.0

We've been warbling on about the new I'm The Best for a while, but it's finally here! We'll get a leaderboard going when the entries start arriving, but we also want you to send ideas for challenges in, as you're the guys that play the game to bits. Finally, we wave goodbye to Jud and Dan this month, as they're off to Do Other Things. Sniff. It won't be quite the same without them (if obviously cleaner). Have a good month!

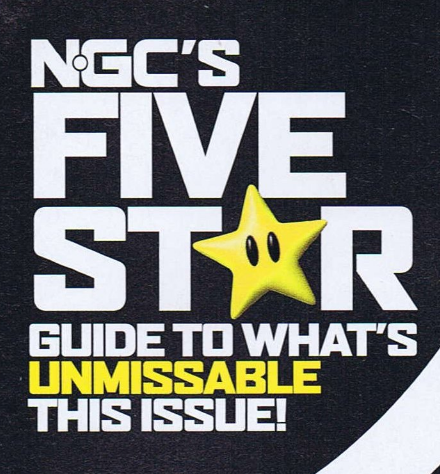
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TURN TO PAGE 34
For a whole load of info on *Rogue Squadron III*.

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WHAT'S IN THE MAG?





REBEL STRIKE

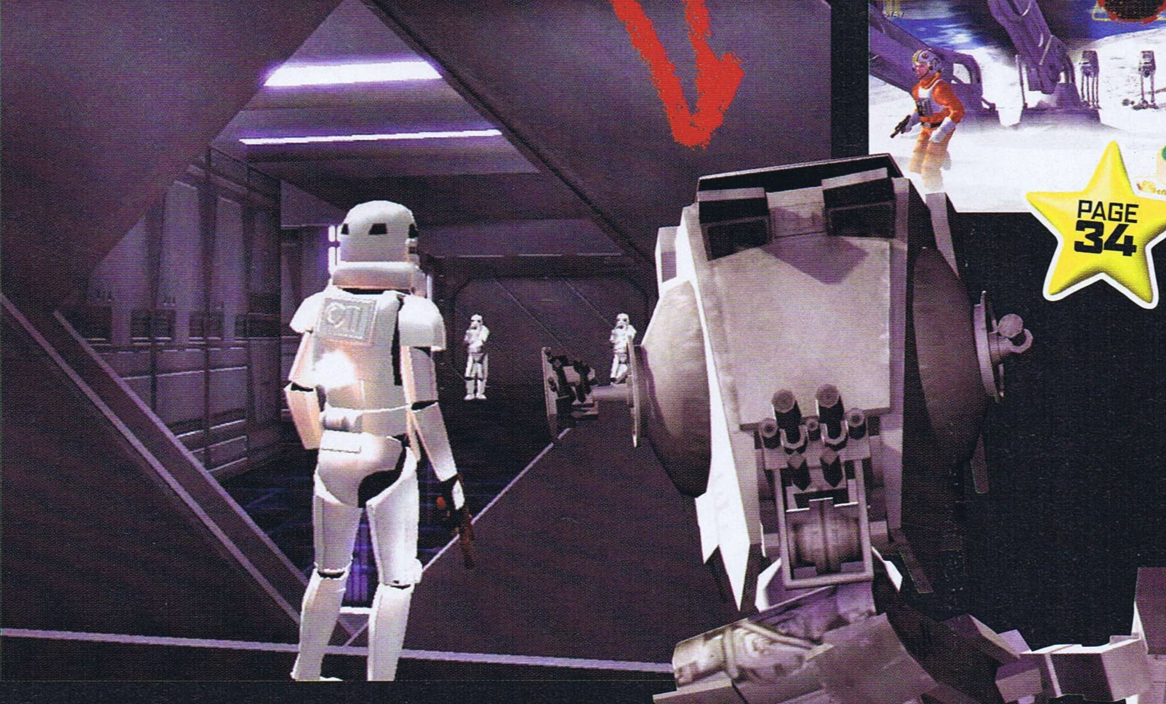
Speeder Bikes! AT-STs! Er… Ewoks? All the dirty details on Factor 5's stunning SW threequel… INSIDE!



2
PAGE 6

JUDGE DREDD

Grud on a greenie! Comicdom's hardest lawman comes to the Gamecube…



STAR WARS ROGUE SQUADRON III REBEL STRIKE

LUKE-ING GOOD!

We take *Rebel Strike* for a spin and get all the juiciest details straight from the horse's mouth. You CANNOT afford to miss this!

MEET ENJiKi

You might have noticed that Enjiki has gained a friend. Apart from the frankly unimaginative 'Pinkjiki', we haven't got a name for her yet (and no, we're not calling her 'Worldy Bloke') so we'd like to hear from you. You could be immortalised forever by choosing the correct name! Write in and tell us! Just think, the adulation, the riches, the, er… um… (Didn't think that through, did we? – Ed)



WARIO WORLD

Nintendo's latest classic platformer, or underwhelming beast-battler?

I'M THE BEST

It's back, and bigger and better than ever before! Show off your gaming skills to the world right here.

4 PAGE 86

CONNECTION!

Nintendo reckon it's the best thing ever. We take a tour of the toppest connectivity features around…









DREDDFUL!

This month, we hopped onto our Lawmaster bikes (read: Jud's crappy Reliant Robin with 'NGC Mobile' painted on the side in Tippex) and scooted Oxford-wards to see the lovely Rebellion, who are developing *Dredd vs Death*. They also own the comic 2000AD, which is mighty nice, we imagine. Anyway, without further ado, it's on to fascist policeman fun. Hurrah!



△ Zombies! No doubt baying – or at the very least groaning – for brains and other such meaty head-treats. Disgusting.



△ More exploits in the undercity.



△ Apply justice to creeps and perps.



△ A bit of the old ultraviolence.

NGC SPECIAL INVESTIGATION

JUDGE DREDD

DREDD VS DEATH

Judgement approaches the Gamecube, and you're going down for 12 levels, perp.



Post *Metroid*, we're all looking for some more major first-person thrills. But where's the next classic going to come from? Let's talk comics…

It's essential to realise the importance of 2000AD to the visual and imaginative language of videogames, especially in Blighty. Take this example for local colour: a few years ago your correspondent was talking to a founding member of Bullfrog, the team who eventually created *Populous, Syndicate, Theme Park* and other luminescent beauties of that particular period, and conversation turned to 2000AD. He described how the entire team stopped working on Wednesday when the issue arrived – and how most developers they knew were exactly the same. It's impossible to overstate the impact the comic has had on British-based developers.

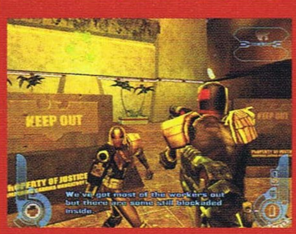
An appearance in game form for the good judge was, perhaps, inevitable, though the route that Rebellion took to get their hands on Dredd was unconventional to say the least. While most companies would have just bought the licence, Rebellion liked it so much that, well, they bought the company – and thusly the comic. And, when it came to choosing which of their characters to make into a game first, there was only really one choice: Judge Dredd.

DREDD LOCKED

What makes him so special, or rather so perfect, for a videogame? Firstly, forget the rubbish film version portrayed by a wholly inappropriate Sylvester Stallone. Dredd isn't a shouting hero who gets the girl. Dredd is very much an anti-hero in the classical definition.



JUDGE FUDGE



While Dredd's more than capable of dealing with most challenges alone, the rest of the Judiciary make regular appearances and engage in combat by themselves. In fact, the factional AI means that if you don't turn up, a conflict could even have resolved itself by the time you show your big-chinned face.

DID YOU KNOW? Judge Dredd is actually a clone, of Chief Judge Fargo. TRUTH!

JUDGE DREDD

Grud on a greenie! Prepare for justice...

DAYSTICK OF THE DEAD

Being a brief guide to the necrotic population of Mega City One.



Zombies are slow moving, and formed when a certain plague infects the already deceased. Slow moving, especially after you've shot their heads clean off.



Conversely, the Vampires come into existence when a live person catches it. Fast moving, and totally feral, these are a considerable challenge.



And since they're cold-blooded, they won't attract your heatseekers. Probably the best thing to do is make them a slightly more obvious target with incendiary weapons. Hurrah!



He's not a nice man. He only cares about the word of the law. In his 26-year career in comics he's achieved a body-count that puts the average totalitarian dictator to shame – famously, 400 million or so with a single button-press. He is a fascist policeman beyond your worst nightmares and a man who, in game form, is clearly best approached from a first-person perspective. After all, approaching from any other perspective might mean he's coming at you, which you honestly wouldn't want at all.

The second thing that the game has going for it one of *the* most perfect science-fiction settings. While the urban-metropolis-on-growth-hormones is now a staple of the genre, years before Blade Runner's edifices pierced the smog, Mega City One was taking over the entire eastern US seaboard in 2000AD. And a madder, stranger or more compelling satirical playground is hard to imagine. "While we traditionally think of Judge Dredd being the star, Mega City is the star. Judge Dredd, while a very popular character, isn't necessarily very appealing," argues Rebellion developer and CEO Chris Kingsley, "He's *barely* 2D – quite American in a sense – you're either with him or against him. It's really Mega City that's the star of the piece." In other words, a man who will not bend meets a world that's trying to bend in every possible way imaginable. Or rather, unimaginable.

"I'm really pleased with the dark humour we've got. We've really got a lot of the wackiness and weirdness of 2000AD. That's really the essence of Mega City," comments Chris. And he's right. It's clear from the moment the game starts that the satirical elements of the Dredd world are being highlighted. From gratified slang about a technology which brings back your

> "JUDGE DREDD IS A FASCIST POLICEMAN BEYOND YOUR WORST NIGHTMARES"

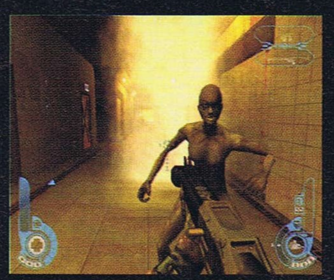
TURN OVER

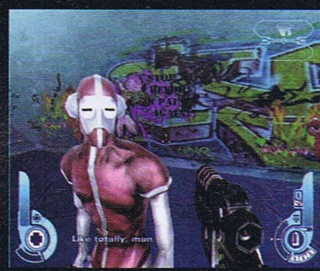
For even more hot, hot, HOT! shots of *Dredd vs Death*. Plus important game info. Who says we never spoil you, eh? Eh? Eh?

DID YOU KNOW? Jes's favourite 2000AD story was Nemesis the Warlock: Book Four. Martin cites Alan Moore's Halo Jones as his tip-top 2000AD strip.



△ Gruesome, and then some. This, we believe, is what they term in the trade a 'head shot', because of the head-shooting.

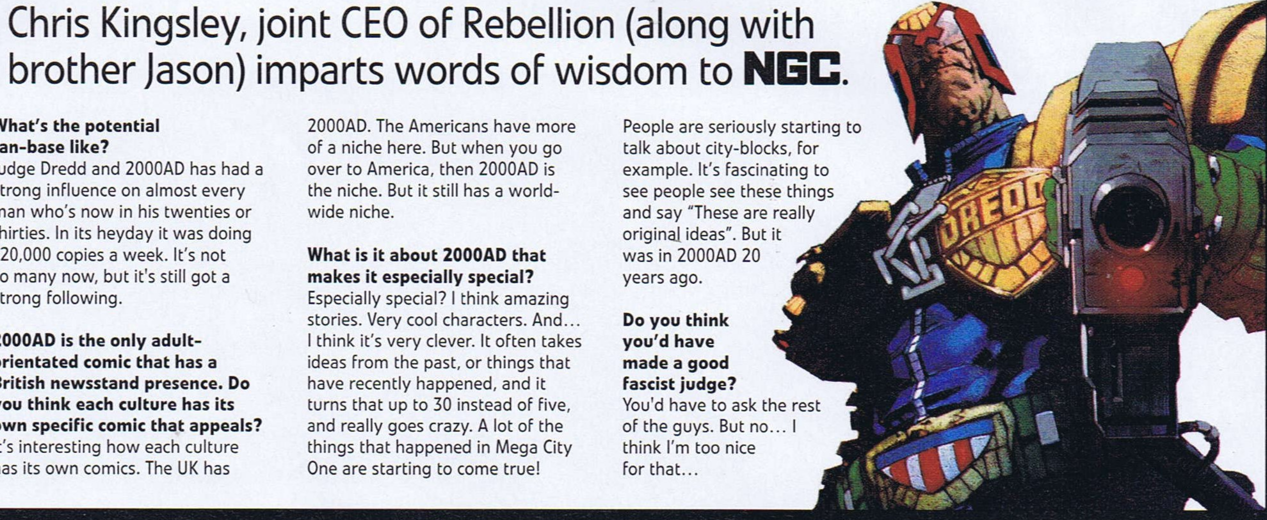

△ Eeeuurgh. More undead horrors.


△ Many of the overwhelming aspects of Mega City One culture are here.


△ You can bet your best socks that if Dredd catches any of these perps spraying graffiti, it's a bullet to the knee and five years in the Iso Cubes. That's justice.

Q&A

Chris Kingsley, joint CEO of Rebellion (along with brother Jason) imparts words of wisdom to **NGC**.



What attracted you to 2000AD to begin with?
Jason and I have both been avid readers of 2000AD since issue one – so we remember the beginnings very fondly, and we were mad fans. We originally approached Egmont/Fleetway to ask about doing one game. Two years later, the whole thing turned around – with a lot of hard work from Jason in particular – and we ended up buying all of the characters. We knew there were loads of things we could do with them, particularly from a games point of view.

What's the potential fan-base like?
Judge Dredd and 2000AD has had a strong influence on almost every man who's now in his twenties or thirties. In its heyday it was doing 120,000 copies a week. It's not so many now, but it's still got a strong following.

2000AD is the only adult-orientated comic that has a British newsstand presence. Do you think each culture has its own specific comic that appeals?
It's interesting how each culture has its own comics. The UK has 2000AD. The Americans have more of a niche here. But when you go over to America, then 2000AD is the niche. But it still has a world-wide niche.

What is it about 2000AD that makes it especially special?
Especially special? I think amazing stories. Very cool characters. And… I think it's very clever. It often takes ideas from the past, or things that have recently happened, and it turns that up to 30 instead of five, and really goes crazy. A lot of the things that happened in Mega City One are starting to come true! People are seriously starting to talk about city-blocks, for example. It's fascinating to see people see these things and say "These are really original ideas". But it was in 2000AD 20 years ago.

Do you think you'd have made a good fascist judge?
You'd have to ask the rest of the guys. But no… I think I'm too nice for that…

beloved pets as zombies, to giant holographic Pot Noodle parodies, it's very clear this isn't a game that takes itself too seriously. The levels are packed with these sorts of distractions, which is a considerable feat when the they're so large.

CITY TO CITY

"The biggest problem with something like Dredd and the Mega City is that the city is so big," notes Chris. "There are 26 years of 2000AD to choose from, so there are so many things we'd have liked to put in. We had to pick the strongest things that would make the best elements for games. Clearly, there are some things that work well in comics, but don't work so well in games." The game has been honed down to 12 levels, taking in the main sights of the Big Meg's various areas. From the start at the Halls of Justice, the story progresses through MegaMalls, the undercity of old New York beneath the overworld, and into the dark dimensions of Judge Death – Dredd's most famous nemesis.

"We'd like to have made the cities even bigger than we did, and more open, but we tried that and it didn't really work," Chris says. "We wanted to keep it focused. After all, Mega City is a *mega* city. We tried to keep the feel of being in the open, but to keep the gameplay reasonably directable." This means that while the levels tend to sprawl, you're subtly and – when that fails – none-too-subtly guided along a route. For example, the zombie-infested MegaMall gives a fair degree of leeway, allowing amusing side-trips to places such as the nightclub, where an entire dancefloor is packed with grooving flesh-rotters, but also adds a firm 'Destination' icon to point you in the right direction. And the levels really are large. Rebellion are using streaming technology to bypass any memory problems, loading in information no matter the direction the player chooses to head in.

"RICOCHET BULLETS BOUNCE OFF SURFACES AND TURN THE AREA INTO A KILLING ZONE"

Of course, being a first-person shooter, guns have to come into play at some point, which is where the Judge's considerable arsenal starts to prove itself. While there's an array of ten weapons, the prime one you'll find yourself relying on is the Lawgiver. It's been the sidearm for Judges in the comics since Dredd was conceived, and takes six varieties of slug. The basic bullet is effective in most situations, allowing you to fire round after round in quick succession. But the most impressive is the high-explosive round, which shows off the game's rag-doll physics to dramatic effect. For harder targets, there's the armour-piercing variety. When opponents back into an enclosed environment, the Ricochet bullets rebound off surfaces to turn the whole area into a killing zone. Heatseekers will home in on anyone foolish enough to be emitting body-heat. That doesn't include undead monsters – there are incendiary rounds for them…

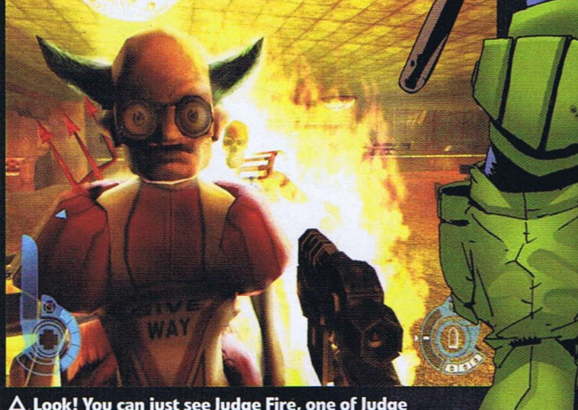
However, fire an incendiary at a normal citizen of the city, and things won't be good. You're meant to judge, not torture. As you apply these weapons of questionable morality against the wrong target, or start to break the rules of the Big Meg yourself, your Law rating will drop. Ignore the warnings over

DID YOU KNOW? Judge Death's first appearance in 2000AD ended with him possessing Psi-Judge Anderson,, who encased herself in the miracle plastic 'Boing' to prevent him ever escaping. Fact!

Δ Looks like Dredd has access to guns other than his Lawgiver.

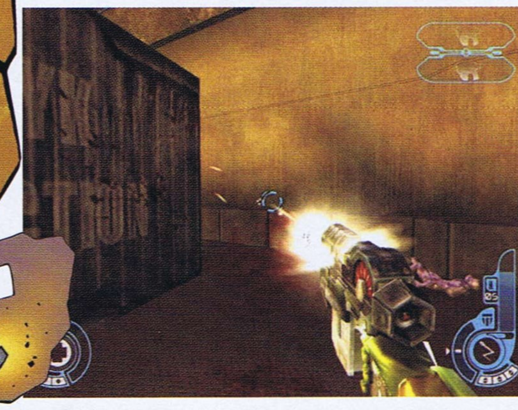
Δ Certainly looks a million times better than *Red Faction II*, doesn't it?


Δ In a second's time, the person behind is going to be very crimson.


Δ Look! You can just see Judge Fire, one of Judge Death's evil cohorts, behind this stupid-haired gimp.

BOUNCE, BOUNCE

A demonstration of the wonders of da ricochet.


Suspect there's opposition lurking behind the corner? Withdraw to a safe position, and open fire.


Zing! Bullets bounce everywhere, and the opponent is pelted with judicial fury. Much fun indeed, and one dead perp.

your communicator, and eventually you'll be considered a rogue judge and the SJS – Special Judicial Squad – will come after you. At which point, your game is essentially over, as increasing numbers of tooled-up judge-hunters engulf your position. However, if you're able to do some positive acts in the community before the SJS arrive, pushing your Law meter upwards, they'll be called off, allowing you to progress on your missions.

PERP-ETUAL MOTION

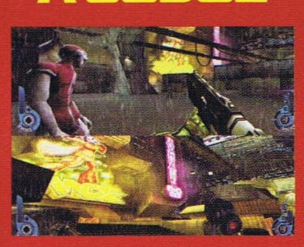
You'll most likely do this by arresting lawbreakers, who won't always be related to the mission in hand. If you pass someone in the street and see them drop a piece of litter, it's a good time to step by and do a little on-the-spot Judging. A simple shout will cause most citizens to fall to their knees, awaiting your sentence. Even some hardened thugs will act similarly, and if they don't, a spot of demoralising could soon change their minds. The game's AI is advanced enough to be aware of situational changes. For example, if you gun down most of a gang-member's friends, they may very well lose the will to fight. Alternatively, if you follow Justice Department guidelines and take out the ringleaders, their subordinates will realise the futility in taking on a judge, and give up.

While Dredd fans will find fault with some omissions, they're mostly minor, and necessary to make a game in a reasonable time-span. The Dredd universe is, clearly, a huge place, and you can't expect everything. The only exclusion of note is the lack of a section where you get to drive the sturdy Lawmaster heavy-duty motorcycle, but far better that than another lacklustre half-measure like we saw recently in *Enter the Matrix*.

Also, while Dredd is a cross-format development, it was a later decision to do a GC version. This will lead to it hitting the shelves a few months later than the rest, but does mean that anything learned through the release of the others will hopefully have been incorporated – maybe ensuring that the best version appears on Nintendo's lovely Cube. At the very least, Rebellion are utilising the Cube's strengths graphically, with some lovely particle-flame effects already present, and sonically.

In a post-*Metroid* world, never mind what's happening on other formats with *Halo 2* and *Half-Life 2*. It's become difficult for any first-person shooter to emerge from the crowd. If it manages to mix the level of wit, satire and ultra-death of the original comics, *Judge Dredd* has every chance of standing proud. Can it rewrite the law of shooters? This remains to be seen.

SPLIT! IT'S A JUDGE

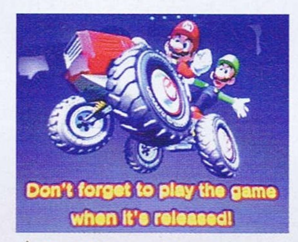

Or rather, split-screen. Dredd's co-operative mode is already excellent, with one of you playing Dredd and the other taking up as his clone-brother Rico. This is possible as the game takes place in its own timeline, whereas Rico was shot dead by Dredd in the real one for being corrupt. Oooh. It's just like Eastenders.

DID YOU KNOW? Unfortunately, Death's accomplices – Fear, Fire and Mortis – freed him. They're later destroyed by the souls of those they killed on their homeworld.





△ There are loads of different routes through this course.



△ The E3 demo of the game finished with this reminder.



△ Luigi about to deposit a mushroom, for big speed action.



△ Just like Toad's Turnpike from *Mario Kart 64*, Mushroom City features traffic to be avoided, including giant *Mario Sunshine*-style Wigglers. To live in the world of Mario must be terrifying.



△ 'Goal'? Shouldn't it say 'finished' or 'hurrah' or 'top hole, old boy', or something? Tsk, etc.


△ Lightning ahoy! it's good to see some of the old favourites back, and as pleasing as ever.

MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH!!

By the hot, sweet tears of baby Jesus! *Mario Kart* is back, baby – back, back, BACK! (*Easy, son – Ed*)



Let's get one thing straight – we love Nintendo more than anything. More than our carbon-based parental units, more than Lex Luthor, more, even, than the office Ken doll who's had his head sheared in half and hollowed out, and a plasticene brain inserted to turn him into Ray Liotta from the Hannibal movie. And if we love Nintendo this much, it goes without saying that we love *Mario Kart* EVEN MORE.

But, and it pains us like sandpapering our fundaments and sitting in a bowl of vinegar to say this, at the moment it's *just too slow*. There. We've said it. Heresy!

But it is. The pace is too sedate, a little sluggish, not exciting enough. *Super Mario Kart* and *Mario Kart 64* offered a sense that you could always eke a little more speed out of your trusty wheeled steed. But at the moment *Double Dash!!* (we're not sure we'll ever get to love the double exclamation mark there – it's just not proper) seems a little one-dimensional in this respect.

The good news, of course, is that even though Shigsy said on his recent London visit that the game was 'complete', it plainly isn't. For instance, at E3 a dodge move which will let you anticipate and avoid incoming projectiles remained to be implemented, and it seems also that powersliding remains unpolished.

The version we played had ruthlessly excised the little hop introduced in *MK64* – which, of course, you could use to dodge things such as the little wheelie bombs – and simply offered a more rally-style slide. We're sure that with

DID YOU KNOW? The eight-player mode means each player can have a telly to themself – if you've also got eight Gamecubes and broadband adaptors.



△ This is a nice touch – you get a little push-start from the passenger. We can't wait for this.

△ Two plumbers and a kart. Heaven!

△ *Mario Kart*. Better than a barrel full of monkeys. Hell yeah.

△ The pre-race fly-by gives you a good view of the course.

time and considerable playtestery the glories of this system will become apparent, but our first impressions of the game show that, well, it just doesn't offer the beauty and excitement we've come to expect from *Mario Kart*. We just hope against hope that a new Secret Corner Turbo is in the works too…

But now that's out of the way, let's get on to the good stuff. The power-ups are much more impressive and over-the-top now (although some might say they run perilously close to overshadowing driving skill, a focus which has always been of paramount importance to *Mario Kart*). The character-specific power-ups (which are distinct from the random ones obtained from the glowing '?' blocks) look hugely entertaining, from Donkey's Kong's absolutely ginormous banana skins to Mario and Luigi's bouncing street-wide fireballs, which come, naturally enough, in red and green. And the two-character system still appears to be as simple-but-strategic as we'd hoped – there's a certain tactical element to character-swappery, as the driver can hold on to a power-up while the chap on the back flings whatever he likes around. Or, if he's holding nothing, he can lean over and steal from a nearby kart. Only they're just not karts anymore, they're more akin to the cars in the Wacky Races. Martin's not convinced, but we reckon it gives the game a bit more character.

> **"THEY'RE NOT KARTS ANY MORE. THEY'RE MORE LIKE WACKY RACES CARS"**

Nintendo are bringing over playable code of all their E3 games this month, so expect more hands-on fun next issue.

NGC VERDICT

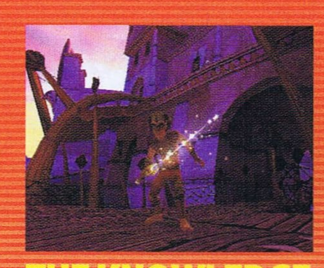
This is going to be better than brilliant, we're sure, but it needs one very important thing; Nintendo absolutely have to SPEED IT UP. Are you listening, Nintendo? You're the best, you really are, but by the chiselled metal jaw of Gosen himself, you simply have to make it faster. Oh, go on. Please? Please? Please? (*Oh, do be quiet – Ed*)

UK NOV | US OCT | JAPAN SEPT

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 3 4 **5**

MUMM-WAAAAH! After a rather promising sneak-peek at E3, we headed over to London, England to have a proper sit-down session with the developers of this imaginative third-person adventure. Show… me… the MUMMY!



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Two styles of gameplay; two wildly different characters. Sphinx, the action hero of the pair, and his invincible mummy sidekick.
- Accumulate a vast array of skills, and items to aid you in your quest, such as blowpipes and remote-controlled bombs.
- Huge, detailed worlds replete with mind-bending puzzles and dangerous enemies.

FACTFILE

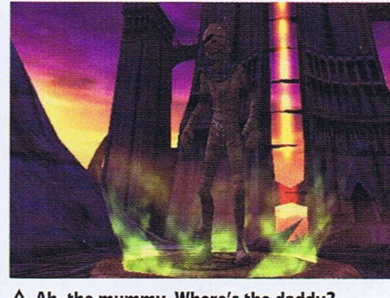
Who's making it?
Eurocom

What have they done before?
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (NGC/75, 78%)
Surprisingly accomplished Potter game.





The animation and gameplay elements remind us of *Starfox Adventures*, but in a good way.

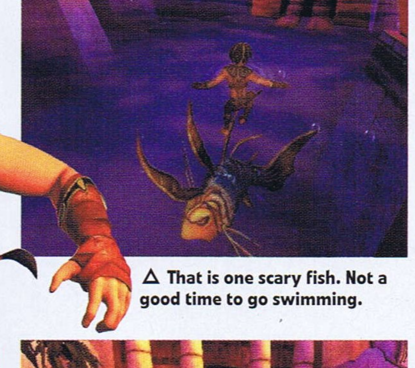


Ah, the mummy. Where's the daddy? Ahahahaha! Um. Look! Over there! (runs)



It's promising, but it'll suffer next to the sublime *Prince of Persia*, which is brilliant.

SPHINX AND THE SHADOW OF SET



That is one scary fish. Not a good time to go swimming.

Who's your mummy? THQ's latest walks like an Egyptian…

Initially it all sounds a bit *Stargate*. Strong Egyptian themes and magic portals that take you to various worlds – each with their unique styling – backs up a game where you have to (*shudder*) find and collect special crowns to stop evil from spreading across each world.

Unsurprisingly the game takes on a third-person view, and at first glance it's difficult to see how this game differentiates itself from the slew of other titles out there. It's not, of course – as THQ were so quick to point out when we went to play it this month. You see, the game is divided into two different styles of gameplay. For 60 per cent of the game you take control of Sphinx. His levels are the more action-orientated, letting you indulge in simple puzzle-solving, but more importantly, exploration of the game's vast worlds, as well as battling hordes of enemies.

The remaining parts of the adventure put you in charge of an 'amusing' mummy character that Sphinx saves early on in the game. Completely devoid of any attacking abilities (he's also invincible too) you can subject him to a number of horrible fates, from electrocution to fire and giant stone crushers, that bestow him with extra abilities that help you in your quest. For example, flattening him in the aforementioned crusher will flatten him out enough to squeeze through bars, furthering his progress. Nifty.

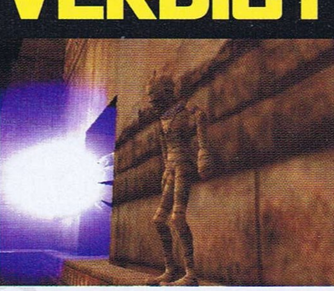
Communication between these two characters is central to making it through the game. More on this as it nears completion in the autumn.



Some kind of magical flim-flammery going on here, by the looks of things. Egypt, eh?

NGC VERDICT

Eurocom are trying to create something interesting with *Sphinx*, for which they are to be applauded. Unfortunately, there were a number of technical issues which sullied the experience – such as an erratic camera which swung round 180 degrees at the most inopportune moments. If they sort this out they'll be onto a winner.



UK AUTUMN | US AUTUMN | JAPAN TBC

ANTICIPATION RATING






1 2 **3** 4 5

DID YOU KNOW? The Egyptians fed garlic to the slaves who built the pyramids to increase their stamina. The also used it to cure over 20 different ailments.

The Simpsons™ Drive You CRAZY

The Simpsons™ ROAD RAGE™

MATT GROENING



THQ

GAME BOY ADVANCE™





THE KNOWLEDGE

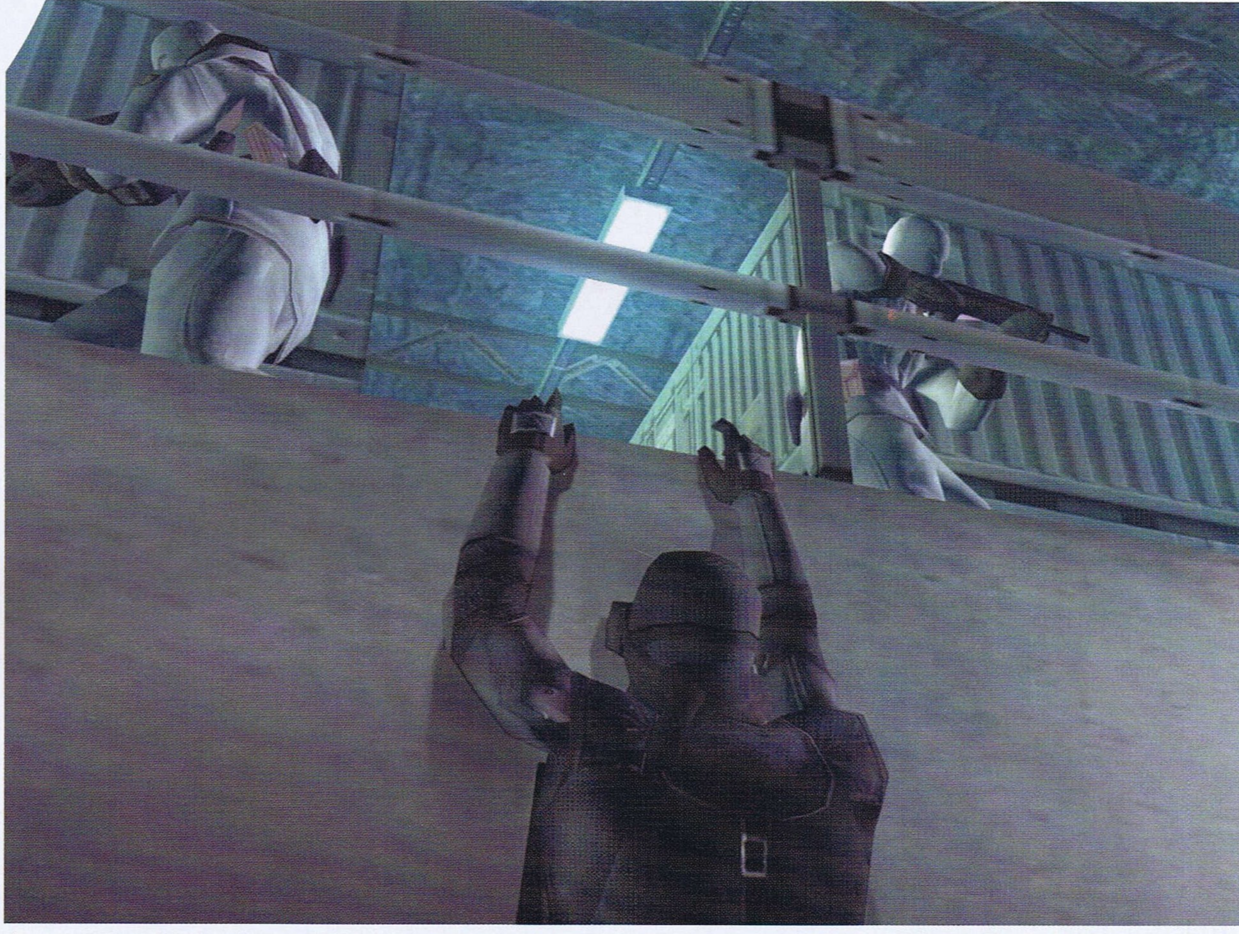
- The story from the first *MGS* with the gameplay from the sequel.
- Produced by Hideo Kojima, the man at the heart of all the previous *Metal Gear* games.
- Coding and graphics by *Eternal Darkness* developers Silicon Knights.
- Completely new cinematics that have been directed by hotshot Japanese action movie director Ryuhei Kitamura.
- GBA link-up features.
- New motion-captured animation.



FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Silicon Knights

What have they done before?
Eternal Darkness (NGC/74, 89%)
Fantastic horror adventure with a convoluted plot. The ideal folks to take on *Metal Gear*!



△ This wasn't the first stealth game, but it's definitely the most famous. A few years ago it was the PlayStation's 'answer' to *GoldenEye* and, while we'd say Rare's effort is the superior game, the fact that *MGS* hasn't been so widely copied may well mean it turns out to have aged a little better.

METAL GEAR SOLID THE TWIN SNAKES

Gaming's most famous mullet returns to face Psycho Mantis and the FoxDie funsters.





At long last, Konami's all-sneaking hero Solid Snake is creeping back onto a Nintendo console. But while PS2 gamers can look forward to *Snake Eater*, the long-awaited sequel to the utterly baffling *Metal Gear Solid 2*, we're going to have to make do with a remake of the 1998 original.

However, if you cast your mind back to what it was like playing both *MGS* games when they were first released, we reckon the original comes out on top in every area – bar the graphics.

Which is the very first thing Nintendo developer Silicon Knights have sorted out. This thoroughly revamped version now boasts the graphical flair of *MGS2* with the superior story and level design from the first game.

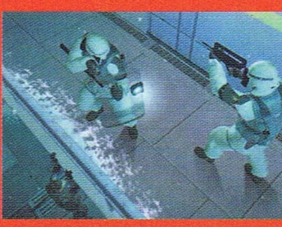
Despite no significant plot changes, *Twin Snakes* isn't quite a scene-for-scene replica of the old PlayStation game. While the main locations remain as they were, the things that keep you on your toes, such as enemy patrols, have been sufficiently altered to make this more than just a walk in the park for experienced players.

Soldiers now have the intelligence and abilities of their *MGS2* descendants, and to counter this Snake has a few abilities he didn't have on the PlayStation.

He can dangle from ledges to avoid enemies, hide bodies in lockers, or shoot out walkie talkies to silence calls for assistance.



GO SOLID

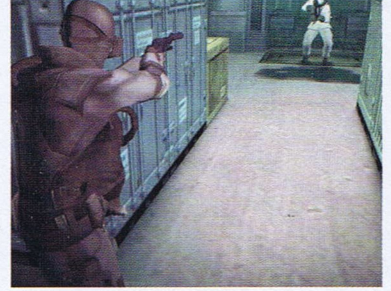


***Twin Snakes* promises to make good use of the GBA link-up feature, but the precise details remain a secret.**

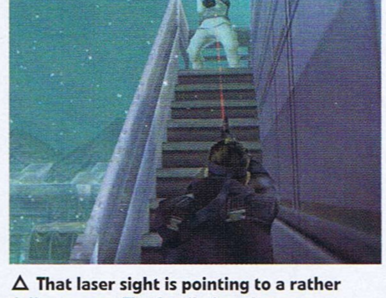
With the developers at Silicon Knights taking care of that side of things, the link-up mode is likely to be more than just a throwaway bonus. So what will it be?

Our best guesses in the NGC office include: a separate screen for displaying codec messages; a mind-game console for top villain Psycho Mantis; or a mobile item shop run by a pervert in a green romper suit. Kooloo-limpah!

Welcome back to the mother of all stealth games

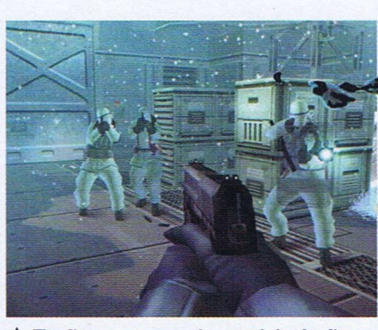


△ Kitted out in his favourite rubber gimp suit, Snake prepares for some violence.



△ That laser sight is pointing to a rather delicate area. The family jewels, even.

△ Hiding in a truck from sinister white-suited guards, with guns. Best be quiet, eh?



△ The first-person mode wasn't in the first Metal Gear Solid, it's a MGS2 mechanic.



△ The game is looking gorgeous, even if some of the textures are reminiscent of the original PSone iteration. Still, there's plenty of time for this to be sorted out – let's hope they fix it, eh?

There's a first-person mode too, which makes aiming past body armour and riot shields more precise. It's also possible to hide against a wall, then leap out around the corner to fire off a few shots.

Because motion-capture technology has advanced considerably since the original game's release, the animation has had to be totally redone. All the in-game animations have been re-recorded by new stunt actors, but it's in the cut-scenes that you're likely to spot the biggest differences.

Movie director Ryuhei Kitamura has been drafted in to take care of the cinema sequences, and the running time will remain at least as long as before. But it'll be interesting to see what the man behind snappy low-budget action films such as Azumi and Versus does with producer Hideo Kojima's script.

The only part of the game we've been able to play so far has been the opening sequence, in which Snake first arrives at the secret base where terrorists are plotting to hold the world to ransom using nuclear weapons. Only the biggest *MGS* fans will be able to spot the gameplay differences between this and the PlayStation version, as the main upgrades are being kept under wraps until much closer to the game's end-of-year release date.

"ONLY THE BIGGEST MGS FANS WILL SPOT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THIS AND THE PLAYSTATION VERSION"

Hideo Kojima has stated that he would prefer to keep the rest of the game a surprise, and given Nintendo's fear of product demos and previews, he stands a good chance of getting his wish.

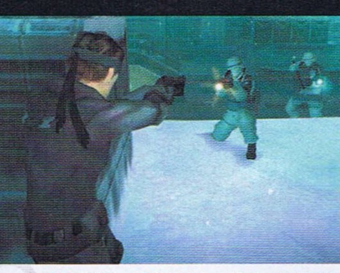
As for the future, if *MGS: The Twin Snakes* turns out to be anything like as popular as it was in 1998, there's the enjoyable prospect of an all-new, Nintendo-only instalment in the series to look forward to.

For the time being however, this one will offer around ten hours of intense gaming, some superb visuals and a chance to revisit a hugely influential piece of gaming history.

Lap it up, folks, because if there's one thing that's true about *Metal Gear* games, it's that five minutes after you've finished your first one you're hungry for more.

NGC VERDICT

This should be a big hit, even though the series is heavily associated with PlayStation. Shame it isn't *MGS 3*, but in the absence of the PS2 sequel, the classic original is certainly the pick of the *Metal Gear* titles, and the one most worthy of a remake. We're looking forward to finding out what the game's secret features will be.



UK WINTER | US WINTER | JAPAN WINTER



ANTICIPATION RATING

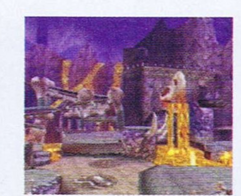


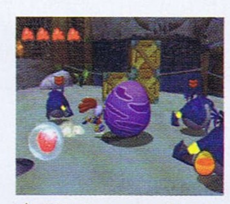



DID YOU KNOW? You can get your name in the game. Well, if you're quick. Go to www.konamijpn.com/products/mgs_tts before 12th July (soon!) and enter the dogtag lottery if you'd like the chance to to 'be' one of Snake's victims.




△ We're not entirely sure what is going on.


△ The levels are full of things to see and do.


△ Billy's egg gets bigger and bigger. Astonishing.


△ The pre-play level fly-by. Pretty, isn't it?



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Egg-rolling insanity from the creator of *Sonic The Hedgehog*.
- Control Billy Hatcher – a boy dressed as a chicken – as he pushes, feeds and then hatches eggs into helpful creatures.
- Use eggs to solve puzzles and defeat enemies, from bumbling simpletons to whopping great super-bosses.
- First game soundtrack to feature a crowing cockerel. We think.


△ Ah yes. The giant pirate chicken. Gnurk.


△ Billy spies an egg and gets unnecessary.


△ You just have to wonder what kind of twisted minds would make a boy in a chicken suit their star.



FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Sonic Team

What have they done before?
Phantasy Star Online (NGC/78, 80%)
Gamecube's only online game. So addictive it should come with a health warning…

BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG

Yuji Naka's first original platformer since Sonic! Believe it or not, it's quite eggsellent! (*Sounds of gunfire*)…



If you hadn't guessed from our rather sarcastic tone when we introduced Sonic Team's new super-colourful platformer to you a couple of months back, we were hardly overjoyed at the news that *this* was what Yuji Naka and his team had actually been spending their time on. Our first play, on the first level of the game, does inspire a little more confidence, however.

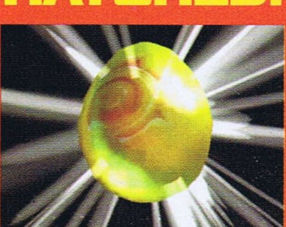
It does, on the face of it, stink of *Sonic*, though. Colourful, sickly, chirpy and unintentionally (perhaps) amusing 'music' accompanies the speedy, egg-rolling action, and much of the level's furniture, including wiry gangways and smashable crates, could easily have been lifted from the old hedgehog's levels.

Despite some similarities, though, *Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg* is a very different breed of game, and surprisingly good fun to to play. As you'd expect, the analogue controls Billy Hatcher himself. Manoeuvre him to the first egg you see, and Billy will grab hold of it and start rolling it around. The feeling of inertia as the egg speeds down slopes and tracks is very pleasing, and very intuitive.

Along the way you'll find plenty of enemies, crates and rocks to steamroll as you explore. Doing so reveals little fruity icons which, as you roll over them, fill up the egg icon in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen. This is essential to the objective on the level we played.

When you start, the level is under cover of darkness. Somewhere in the landscape (as shown by a pre-level cut-scene), is a golden egg locked up in a cage. The first thing you have to do is grab an egg and fill it full of fruit. As you do. The egg increases in size and the extra weight makes it (subtly) more difficult to control. Fill up the egg

HATCHED!



So far we've only managed to release one kind of animal. A giant pirate chicken, who brings about the onset of daylight and presents you with an 'Emblem' of dubious significance.

There are, however, a number of differently coloured and patterned eggs to fill (with fruit). Apparently you'll be able to hatch creatures from them to help you in your quest. No doubt each will be better at carrying out certain tasks than others. Unfortunately, we have no idea as to the specifics of this feature…

DID YOU KNOW? A hen requires 24 to 26 hours to produce a single egg. Geraint requires merely half that time to produce a special 'Welsh egg'.

Whimsical egg-based platforming, sir? Yolk no further…

△ There's the pirate fowl again, and a gravity-defying emblem.

△ These rings blast you through the air, like *Donkey Kong 64*'s barrels. There's no sign of Lanky Kong, mind.

with fruity bonuses and you'll be able to depress a nearby glowing floor switch that will unlock the cage.

After all that, you can take control and start rolling the golden egg around. Again, you have to defeat enemies to collect the fruit, and as the egg fills, it begins to sparkle. Once that happens, and you've managed to roll the ovulation to its final destination, it eventually hatches, revealing… a *pirate chicken* (you heard), who cock-a-doodle-doos (can't *believe* we just typed that) daybreak around the level, thus heralding its end. Of course he does!

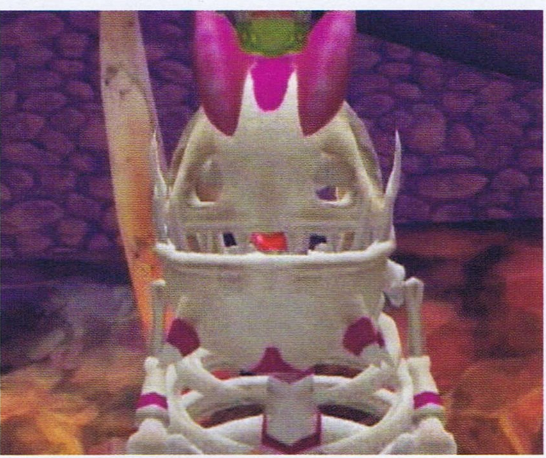
That's it. That's all we've played so far, and despite our initial scepticism, we're actually quite impressed with it all. Even Kittsy – who would usually rather stick needles in his eyes than play anything 'Naka's touched' – was pleased by the simple controls and fun-potential to be had in the game.

There's so much scope for the game's basic premise. We've seen some quite lovely boss battles being played for us, and some egg-rolling techniques that we've yet to get to grips with ourselves. You can, for example, also kick the eggs like footballs to dispatch enemies. There's a stunning-looking snow level where you get to roll up huge snowballs, and some of the downhill sections look like delivering some seriously hardcore high-speed thrills.

All in all, it's rather promising, thanks mainly to the lovely intuitive controls and high production values. The presentation – despite being a little on the twee side, with its cute little talking chickens and visuals that look as if they were designed by your local primary school inmates – is as accomplished as you'd expect from Sonic Team. The environments all look stunning, with enough activity to give the impression that you're rolling around in a giant multicoloured playground.

Sonic Team expect to have *Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg* done and dusted in time for a Christmas release. We hope they're right.

> **"THE FIRST THING YOU HAVE TO DO IS GRAB AN EGG AND FILL IT WITH FRUIT, AS YOU DO"**



△ You just know that this bloke is a boss. Look at 'im. Go on.



Never thought we'd say this, but we're actually looking forward to this now. It's a little bit (only a little, mind you) like *Glover* on the N64 (albeit more accessible and polished), and the sense of fun throughout the sections we've played is inescapable. We'll have more on this as soon as we get our hands on better playable code.



UK 2003 | US SEPT | JAPAN 2003

ANTICIPATION RATING






1 2 3 4 5





THE KNOWLEDGE

- The game features 5,200 lines of dialogue from the cast of the show.
- The final level is themed around the Treehouse of Terror episodes.
- For every seven cards you manage to collect, a new *Super Sprint*-style mini racer level will unlock, where you can race against up to three mates!
- Almost every conceivable location and character is featured – even the likes of Comic Store Guy, Nelson and Truckosaurus.
- One of the 80 available vehicles is Snake's Bandit car, complete with a dead body in the boot!



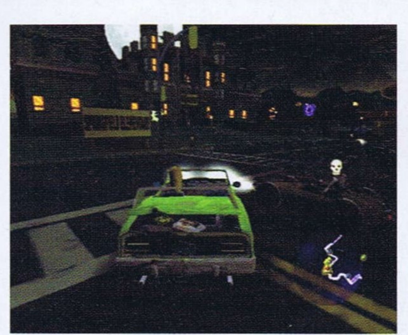
△ Springfield's landmarks are all here.



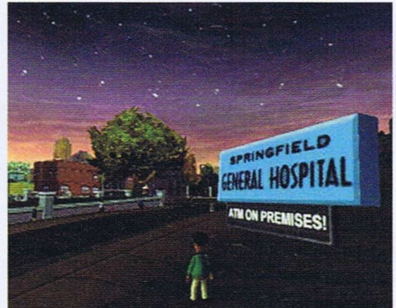
△ Bart hangs around seedy alleyways.



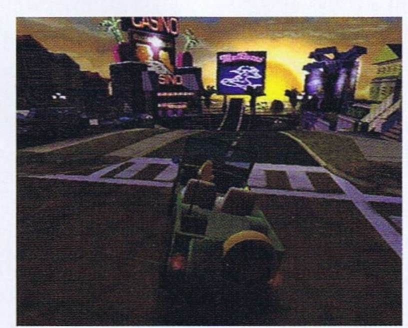
△ It's like *Grand Theft Auto*, with cartoon characters. Kill, Homer, kill! And then drink beer. Mmm.



△ Yes indeed, the transition from day to night is all present and correct in this little beaut.



△ Get used to seeing a lot of the hospital. Or, at least, putting a lot of people inside it.



△ Believe it or not, this looks like being a really good game. With the Simpsons! Cripes.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Radical Entertainment

What have they done before?
The Simpsons: Road Rage (NGC/68, 52%)
Poor imitation of *Crazy Taxi* with 'funny' scripts and characters.

THE SIMPSONS HIT & RUN

America's first family are back for some pedestrian-whacking hilarity. Mmmmm… violence!



Every time we see another 'hilarious' Simpsons game, a groan can be heard for miles around. So imagine our surprise when we caught our first glimpse of a very funny, superbly playable game featuring the full cast of our favourite cartoon.

The Simpsons: Road Rage fell short of the mark, and we won't even start with *Skateboarding* on the PS2. But *Hit & Run* looks set to finally rid the Simpsons licence of its woeful heritage.

It offers a splendidly authentic Springfield experience, complete with Burns' Manor, Cletus' shack and the world-famous Evergreen Terrace. Developers Radical chose to work closely with 20th Century Fox and Matt Groening, the makers of the cartoon, in order to create the most authentic and recognisable version of Springfield yet.

And this co-operation should ensure that characters and settings are so true to the series that no nitpicking fan can find fault.

The storyline itself is original, but seems right at home in the Simpsons world. It begins as Homer swats a wasp with a newspaper, and unwittingly sparks an intergalactic war (admittedly, it sounds crazy, but somehow makes perfect sense in Springfield). As you try to stop the alien race from brainwashing the town with Buzz cola (fully endorsed

Yellow, dysfunctional, and on Cube again



△ Will Homer pay for his purchases, or will he whip out a pistol and blow Apu's head clean off?

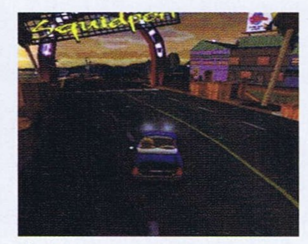
OLD DUFFER

Collect cards to unlock races in the minigame, an arcade racer that supports simultaneous racing for up to four players. This alone beats *Road Rage* hands down!

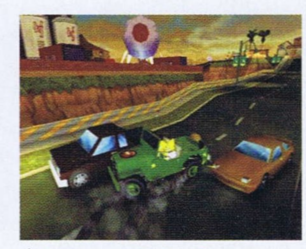
△ Homer contemplates burglary.



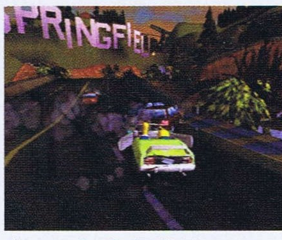
△ Sinister. There are alien forces at work here in Springfield.



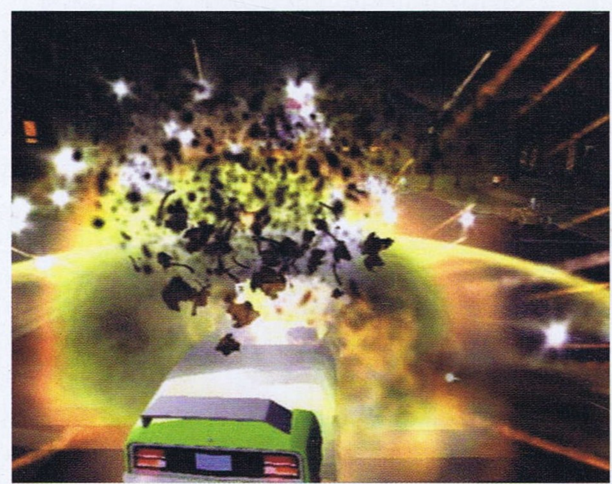
△ The timeless pleasure of a fast car and an open road.



△ Very poor driving. Try not to do this when the cops are around.



△ Actually, Springfield's cops are notoriously incompetent. Hooray!



△ There are 80 types of vehicle in the game, although after this little mishap it's probably only 79. More than enough to be getting on with.





△ Going like the clappers in one of Springfield's leafy suburbs. Head to a vantage point, and there are more landmarks than you can imagine.

SCALE!



Perhaps the most exciting aspect of *Hit and Run* is its sheer scale. It contains every Springfield landmark you can think of, and there are 80 cars to hitch a ride in or buy to explore in. You can also jog around on foot, and venture into Moe's and the Flanders' house if it takes your fancy.

by Krusty the Clown, of course), you have to also avoid the attention of Chief Wiggum and his band of hapless cops.

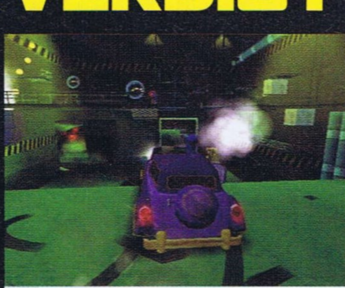
Every time you kick or run over a pedestrian, or destroy property, your Hit & Run meter will fill up. Once full, the cops will chase you and try to ram your vehicle. If you are hit, you lose the coins that you have collected in the level, which can be used to purchase up to 80 vehicle types and extra character skins. For each of the seven levels you take control of either Homer, Bart, Lisa, Marge or Apu. Your goal is to complete seven missions, and collect seven cards per level. The game also features some sidesplitting cut-scenes and loads of subtle jokes and references to the cartoon series.

> **"H & R LOOKS SET TO FINALLY RID THE SIMPSONS LICENCE OF ITS WOEFUL HERITAGE"**

Hit & Run will undoubtably come as a shock. It's well-designed, extremely playable, and – get this – genuinely funny. And no, we don't mean Jethro funny.

NGC VERDICT

The code we saw was almost complete, and there's little that Radical need to do to show the world the way Simpsons games really should be made. Even if you're not a fan of the cartoon (yes, both of you), this looks set to be a hugely enjoyable game. It's got all the Simpsons hilarity with a hint of violence – how can it fail?



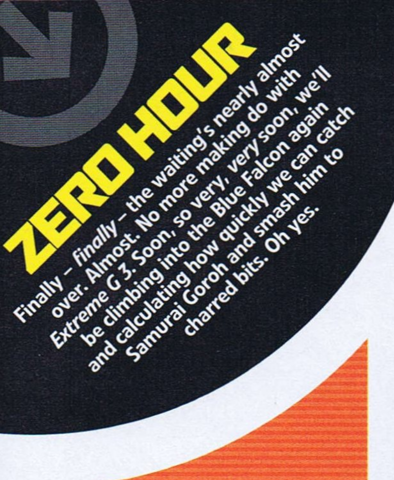
UK SEPT | US SEPT | JAPAN SEPT

ANTICIPATION RATING






1 2 3 **4** 5





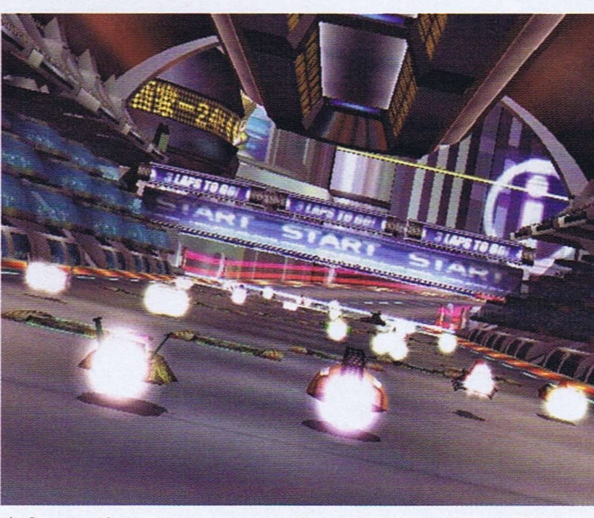
△ Boosting down tubes: not for lightweights.



△ Horizontal or vertical split? You choose.



△ Egad! Has four-player ever looked so yum?



△ As ever, victory means you start the next race last on the grid. So you can plough through the opposition like some crazy nuclear bulldozer.



△ Oh, Samurai Goroh. We have such plans for you and your pink racing machine. Many involving fire, friction burns and sharp metal shards.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Race one of 30 ludicrously fast 'machines' around assorted dizzying tracks, at speeds immeasurable to mortal man.
- Play fair and get past the line first by gentlemanly means, or slam into the opposition and try to make them explode.
- Form an irrational hatred for certain computer players. Yes, Samurai Goroh. We mean you.
- Two-player mode enables you to split the screen horizontally or vertically. As you wish.
- Wail loudly: "Merciful heaven! My eyes! MY EYES!"



FACTFILE

Who's making it?

Sega

What have they done before?

Super Monkey Ball 2 (NGC/78, 85%)

New and improved simian-rolling lunacy, with added annoying story mode.



F-ZERO GX

1,000kph isn't *that* fast. It's only 600-odd miles per hour. Easy.



Thank Jesus and all the apostles. We couldn't help but worry that having Sega on the *F-Zero* case might result in disaster. Anyone can make it look the part, but getting it to play right is another matter. And if it's not exactly right, it's not proper *F-Zero*.

It's – mostly – all there. All your favourite racers and machines (the unpopular ones have been replaced, though), near-identical controls, but now, brilliantly, they've dispensed with *X*'s speed/looks trade-off.

> "EXACTLY WHAT EVERY F-ZERO FAN HAS BEEN PRAYING FOR. AND WE DO MEAN EXACTLY"

F-Zero GX is exactly what everyone who loves *F-Zero X* has been praying for. And we mean *exactly*. Sega have syphoned the gameplay and feel out of the N64 cart, drip-fed it into the Gamecube and then bombarded it with dangerous new levels of speed and visual gorgeousness, cackling like some insane research chemist who's just been around the labs spraying a volatile new contact explosive on all the toilet seats.

Instead, they've made it look staggeringly lovely and shift at terrifying new speeds. You've never seen a racer this fast. You may complain that it's too fast to be playable, as it assails you with a max-velocity barrage of too much sensory data. But you'd be a big whining girl to do so.

This is proper *F-Zero*. Be happy.





△ Captain Falcon's just asking for a kicking dressed like that.

NGC VERDICT

We are, you might have guessed, mightily relieved. Getting *F-Zero* right is some task, and Sega have risen to the challenge. It feels spot-on, and it's loaded with so much visual glory that you'll spend a lot of time crashing into things due to going, "Ooh! Look at that!". This one simply can't arrive soon enough for us.



UK OCTOBER | US SEPT | JAPAN AUGUST

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 3 4 **5**

DID YOU KNOW? The world land-speed record is 763.035mph, held by ThrustSSC, a twin-jet-powered beast that wouldn't look at all out of place in *F-Zero GX*. We have touched it.

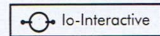
THE ART OF AN ASSASSIN

THE THROAT CUT
Blood type "AB" on mosaic tiled floor
Specialist equipment: Scalpel
Produced in India 2002.

Donated by: Dr. Von Kamprad

NINTENDO GAMECUBE









WORM TURNED

Team 17's soil-burrowing soldiers are back, and this time they're in glorious 3D. We got our hands on the latest version of the game, to see whether the classic *Worms* simplicity still shines through among all those polygons and, erm, voxels.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- The same classic worm battle action from the old 2D versions, lovingly recreated in 3D.
- Fully deformable voxel-based landscapes. Blork! Bling! Bzzzzt!
- Wormpot mode generates random levels and game rules.
- Includes the Wormopedia, which is very much like an encylopaedia, except it's all about the worm.
- Vast one-player mode that promises at least one unlockable reward after each level.
- Turn-based four-player modes.
- Bonus games.

FACTFILE

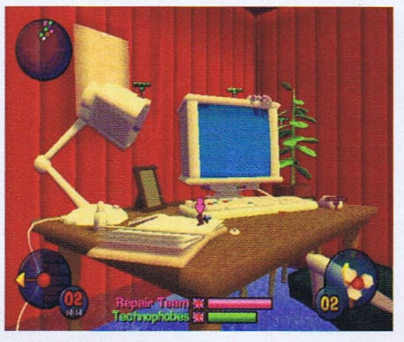
Who's making it?
Team 17

What have they done before?
Worms Armageddon (NGC/36, 85%)
A vintage helping of annelid annihilation that still stands up as a great four-player game.





△ Don't you just want to shoot him dead?



△ Yes, this is an actual level from the game.



△ Giving them a taste of homing missile.



△ Previous *Worms* games were published by Infogrames. This time it's Sega, with development duties handled by the regular Team 17 folk.



△ Looks like the realistic Vietnam levels from the very first *Worms* are never coming back. We always liked them better than the 'wacky' ones.

WORMS 3D

A whole new dimension for the psychotic wrigglers…

Almost every major game from the old days has been updated into 3D by now, but there are a few significant stragglers. Luckily now that technology is sufficiently advanced, one of the very best is about to join the 21st century.

Developers Team 17 had this game in mind for many years. But it's only the power of today's consoles that have made it possible to recreate deformable landscapes – an essential part of the *Worms* experience – in 3D.

"THERE'S A HUGE AMOUNT OF COMPLICATED MATHS UNDER THE SIMPLE GRAPHICS"

There's a huge amount of impossibly complicated maths under the simple, rounded graphics. Of course, the only thing you'll notice is that after piloting a nuclear-tipped sheep into a group of enemy worms, there'll be a giant, muddy, 3D hole where the poor creatures were standing.

Worms 3D plays an essentially identical game to its 2D brothers, with the extra dimension adding new tactical possibilities. This time, your worm army can attack or be attacked from all directions.

Other enhancements include the Wormpot mode – a slot machine that generates not only random landscapes, but random rules too. A huge one-player mode is also promised, in what's set to be the best bit of wormination to date.





△ All the old weapons return, along with around 15 new ones.

NGC VERDICT



This has the potential to be massive. As hardened *Worms* fans ourselves, we were delighted to find that it handles just like the 2D versions. The complexity of the 3D levels means the Gamecube has no memory left for a replay mode, but apart from that, it's playing as good as any *Worms* enthusiast could hope for.



UK WINTER | US WINTER | JAPAN TBA

ANTICIPATION RATING



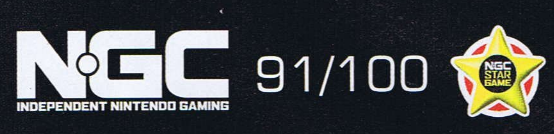



1 2 3 4 **5**

DID YOU KNOW? The original *Worms* for the Commodore Amiga home computer was inspired by a simple PC artillery game called *Scorched Earth*.





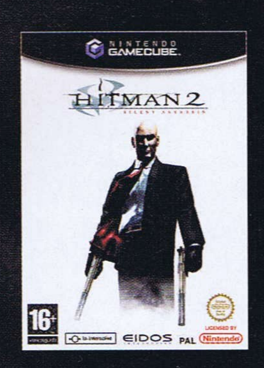


"THE BEST 'MATURE' TITLE ON GAMECUBE"

HITMAN 2 - SILENT ASSASSIN

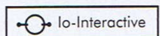
Enter the mind of a genetically-engineered assassin-for-hire, whose deadly efficiency is now needed more than ever. Lured back into a global ring of deception by a twisted Russian crime boss, he must kill not only to make a living, but to continue living. This time it's not just business...**it's personal.**

www.hitman2.com

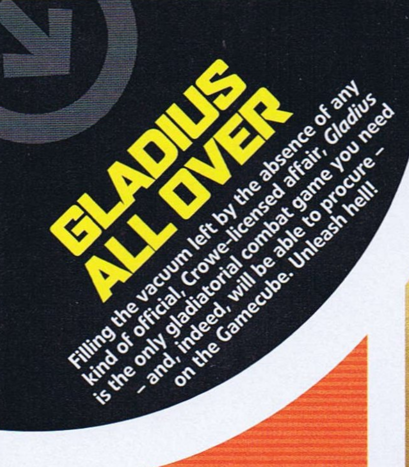


27TH JUNE
FOR GAMECUBE





EIDOS INTERACTIVE





THE KNOWLEDGE

- Gladius is blazing a trail as the Gamecube's first-ever "turn-based-action-role-playing-game".
- Tournament mode allows players to enhance their gladiatorial teams outside of the main adventure.
- Linda Cardellini is on board for some of the voice acting. Just in case you aren't familiar with her 'work', she played Velma in the Scooby Doo movie.
- LucasArts have developed a total of 33 different titles, 20 of which are Star Wars games.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
LucasArts

What have they done before?
Rogue Leader (NGC/68, 87%)
Without question the very finest Star Wars game known to man/men everywhere.

△ Combat here is a cunning blend of real-time and turn-based, allowing players just one shot to pull off their most devastating attacks.

△ Spookily powered weapons can be acquired as you progress.

△ Lady gladiators much prefer skimpy clothing to that nasty chafing armour.

GLADIUS

It's only taken them three whole years to cotton on…



Cast your minds back to the first year of the new millennium and a certain film that brought us the macho Aussie meathead Russell Crowe. Gladiator not only broke the blockbusting bank, but this action thriller was arguably film of the year.

With all this in mind, it seems kind of strange then that that no-one in the videogame business heard the potential sound of millions of Roman coins being rubbed together and snapped up this movie licence, one which would surely allow the owner to print his own money – however turd-like the game.

Nope – aside from THQ's old PS2 nag of a chariot racer, *Circus Maximus*, we haven't exactly been invaded by legions of Roman-inspired videogames in recent times. That may all be about to change, however, as LucasArts' latest all-conquering hero ceremoniously strolls into view. Confusingly billed as a turn-based-action-role-playing-game (breath), *Gladius* plays like a regular RPG for the most part, but then melds turn-based and real-time elements to form its combat system. The result plays something like a cross between *Super Mario RPG* and the PS2's *Final Fantasy X*.

Set over four radically different locations, the game contains 20 different gladiatorial arenas, which range from the blood-drenched dust bowls at the edge of the empire, to the mighty opulence of Rome itself (and there are another 12 locations yet to be revealed). Willing players must not only battle the multitude of different warriors that are contained in each land, but also attempt to lure

PICK YOUR OWN



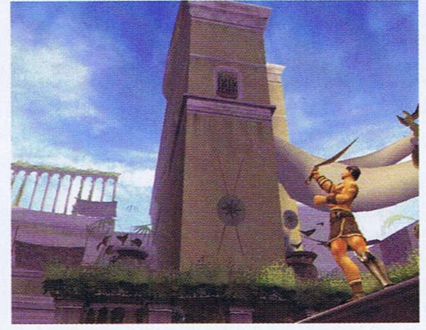
Gladiators come in 16 different forms, including the Pride of Rome, the Witches of the Galdr – who can sing magical songs and chants – and the javelin-hurling Peltast warriors. Each character can also be customised with over 100 different skills and over 400 individual weapons, helmets, shields and other accessories for the warrior about town.

DID YOU KNOW? The Romans were pretty big on cleanliness. Apparently, they used powdered mouse-brains as toothpaste.

May all your gladiator dreams come true



△ You can only have six in your party, but AI teams can have far more. Bah!



△ Confucius he say "man who fight with big feather must be blimmin' hard".



△ Hone your fighting skills by going straight into battle with the game's Tournament mode.

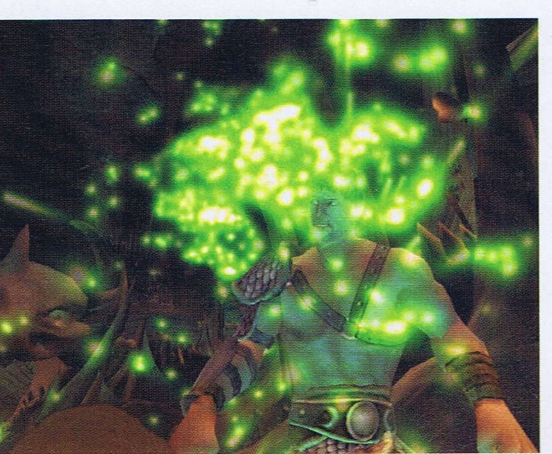
GOING APE

Gladius' finest enemies come in the form of a tribe of chimp-like warriors. Whether these apes can be taught the civilised ways of the gladitorial arena remains to be seen. One thing we're sure of, though, is that they make fearsome foes.





△ Weapons can be acquired in the RPG aspect of the game, or from the hands of dead foes.



△ Magical attacks are common, if your decide to go toe-to-toe with some of the more outlandish gladiators in the game.



△ The battle HUD owes a lot to *Final Fantasy*.



△ Grunts can be hired if you've got enough cash.

the finest fighters into their party. Potential recruits range from regular combat-ready warriors to strange mystical creatures capable of casting spells. Players can have a maximum of six combatants in their party at any one time. Each fighter comes with a set of attacks that can be upgraded through gaining experience. The attacks themselves range from primitive single-button-press moves to more convoluted assaults, which require you to pull off finger-fangling commands.

The game's epic story focuses on two central characters, from different sides of the Roman tracks. Ursula is the daughter of a barbarian king, while Valens is the son of an infamous gladiator. Between them, the two warriors are trying to prevent war from breaking out between their respective homelands. The game is playable from the perspective of either character, and each of the two adventures is reckoned individually to contain at least 36 hours of solid play.

Given its more outlandish elements, *Gladius* is about as authentically Roman as a Caesar salad. But, despite being something to give history teachers nightmares, its blend of action and turn-based combat elements certainly sounds interesting.

LucasArts may not be world-renowned for cranking out their own brand of RPGs, but those that they have produced have certainly smacked of quality. *Gladius* is nothing if not intriguing, and we'll be keeping a beady eye closely fixed on its progress over the coming months.



NGC VERDICT

Blending RPG elements together with real-time and turn-based combat, *Gladius* must be given a thumbs-up for attempting something original. While the game's adventuring is not exactly going to give *Zelda* sleepless nights, LucasArts' has a solid role-playing pedigree – they gave us the *Monkey Island* series after all. We've got high hopes for this one, keep them crossed that *Gladius* can really cut it.



 UK AUTUMN  US AUGUST  JAPAN TBA

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE INCLUDED

- Deformable character models, which would allow your gladiators to carry their battle scars right through the game.
- Gladiatorial teams downloadable onto memory cards, so you can take your fighters round to a mate's and batter them in the arena.

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 3 **4** 5





Looks like a peaceful Cornish fishing village.



Ahh, so the aliens haven't been banished at all.



The spooky moment when aliens enslave Jade's animal buddies.

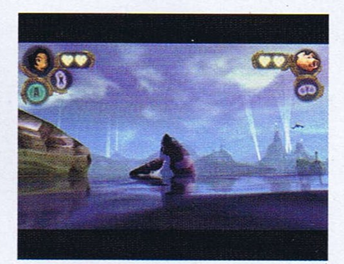


THE KNOWLEDGE

- Save the planet Hyllis from the hidden alien menace.
- Use super photo-journalism powers to crack the conspiracy and catalogue previously unknown animal species.
- Once catalogued, use the deadly aikido staff to mercilessly execute said animal species.
- Runs on the powerful Jade engine – designed for this game, and also used in the forthcoming *Prince of Persia*.



This first boss battle is essentially just an introduction to the combat control system.



You'll find some strange creatures in this otherworldly ocean.



Electrical danger signals.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Ubi Soft

What have they done before?
Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc (NGC/78, 84%)
Solid and varied platform adventure, with one of the best GBA link-up modes around.



BEYOND GOOD

A concept we like to call 'begoovil', to be sure, to be sure…



Remember this one from the DVD video that came free with issue 70? It certainly looked unusual back then, and now after three years of development, we've had the chance to play an almost complete version.

The good news is that it seems likely to live up to the promise of that early demo footage.

Beyond Good and Evil is an unusual mixture of game styles that can count titles as diverse as *Wave Race*, *Pokémon Snap* and *Zelda* among its many influences.

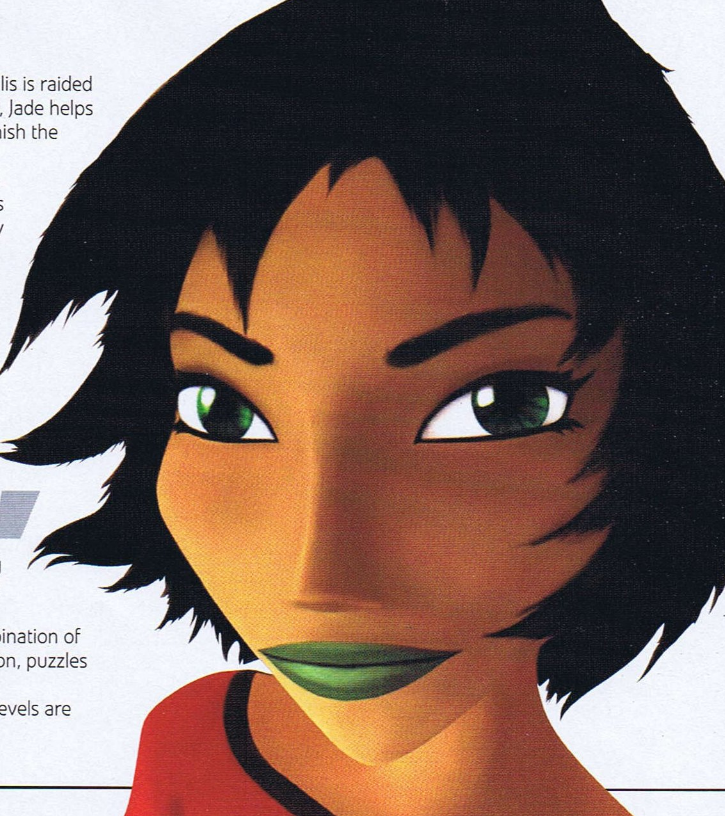
It's all about a woman called Jade who takes care of a bunch of half-animal adolescents on her home planet of Hyllis. When Hyllis is raided by an insectoid alien race, Jade helps defeat the threat and banish the segmented intruders.

But she soon comes to distrust her government's assurances that normality has been restored. Aided and abetted by her uncle Pey'j, a giant talking pig, she takes her trusty camera and sets out to find proof that something very sinister is happening behind the scenes.

What follows is a combination of fighting, racing, exploration, puzzles and even photography.

Broadly speaking, the levels are

> "ALTHOUGH YOU CAN'T DIRECTLY CONTROL THE PIG, YOU CAN TELL HIM WHEN TO BUTT-SLAM"



DID YOU KNOW? Project leader Michel Ancel based many of his character designs on Russian, Japanese and Chinese fairy tales. Even Rayman. Yipes!

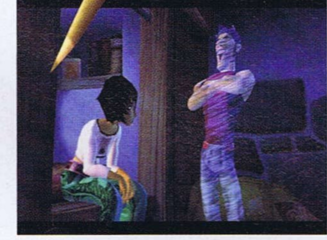

Meet Pey'j, the nicest talking pig in the world. He's also somehow Jade's uncle. How'd that happen?


Oh yes, this game is certainly a looker.



AND EVIL


After three years in development, the graphics are looking superb.


Cinematic stuff, isn't it?

The main hub area, where you're free to play hovercraft.

divided into indoor and outdoor types. During the outdoor scenes, Jade whizzes around the place in an armoured hovercraft, while she's on foot and accompanied by Pey'j for the indoor sequences.

The hovercraft is fantastic. Very manoeuvrable, and quick enough to allow for racing sub-games. By collecting items from defeated enemies, it can also be upgraded with new weapons or even converted into an aircraft.

So far in the preview version we've played a very slick aquatic boss battle, which involved shooting sections off an oversized snake's tail, and a spot of speeding around the bustling city hub level. It's technically impressive and very detailed.

The interior sections are different. You control Jade in a typical third-person adventure style, with Pey'j doing his own pig-type thing whenever he's present.

Although you can't directly control the pig, you can tell him when to do his butt-slam move on certain enemies, before piling in with Jade for a combo attack.

Pey'j is a capable fighter, but if he wanders off and gets mauled to death by monsters, it's game over. This means you have to share the food power-ups you find.

There are the obligatory stealth sections too, although you're free to forget about sneaking if you prefer. In one scene, for example, you can opt to tiptoe past a pair of armoured guards, or just shoot them in their jet packs, triggering an amusing Boba Fett-style demise.

The *Pokémon Snap* element throughout the game means you'll have to be quick with the shutter button to photograph evidence of alien activity. On top of these crucial pics, you must get a visual record of all the wildlife you encounter, as biologists back in the city will pay good money for weird animal shots.

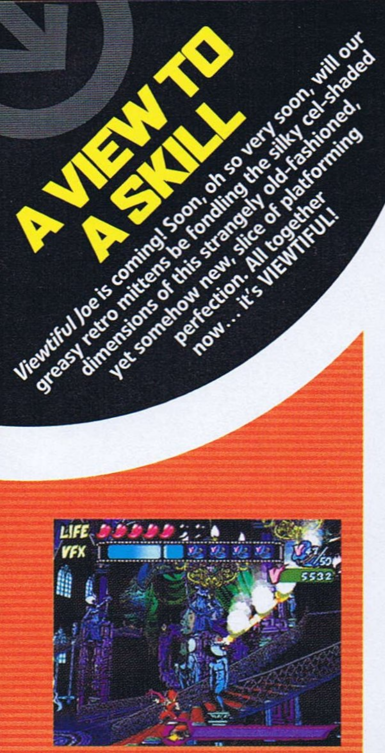
There's clearly a lot more to the game than the snippets we've played so far. What we've seen has certainly been impressively varied, and we're hoping the finished product has plenty of new surprises. Shame it's on all formats, really. This one is very Nintendo.

NGC VERDICT

This looks as polished as you'd expect from the people behind *Rayman*. The first level was a bit basic, but as soon as the hovercraft scenes kicked in, it proved to be one of those rare games that had us messing around with the controls just because it was fun to see what the little vehicle could do. We'll be keeping a close eye on this.

UK OCTOBER | US OCTOBER | JAPAN TBA

ANTICIPATION RATING
1 2 3 4 5



A VIEW TO A SKILL

Viewtiful Joe is coming! Soon, oh so very soon, will our greasy retro mittens be fondling the silky cel-shaded dimensions of this strangely old-fashioned, yet somehow new, slice of platforming perfection. All together now… it's VIEWTIFUL!

THE KNOWLEDGE

- Control Joe as he becomes a superhero, just to save his missus from evil. Aaaaahhhhhh!
- Comic-book styled visuals with bizarre video-jockey influenced gameplay.
- Use three different VFX in order to speed up, slow down and focus in on the blistering battles, which enhances your combo potential.
- Reward points for kicking ass in elaborate and 'beautiful' ways.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Capcom

What have they done before?
Resident Evil (NGC/72) 89%
Revamped zombie-horror shamblefest.

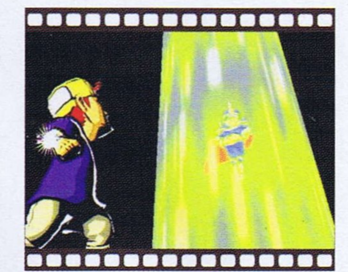
NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING HANDS-ON PLAYTEST



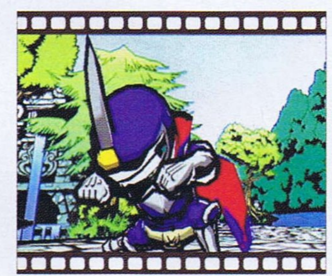
Ah, a feast fit for a king, or at the very least a two-dimensional cel-shaded red-bodygloved superhero. *Joe* might seem incredibly (ahem) 'old-skool' but it's presented with incredible verve, passion and good humour.



Crazy Japanese superhero action. Do you think westerners'll buy it?



Joe's mentor appears in a flash of light. You've got to beat him – hard.



Oh look! Here he is. Get away when he starts spinning. It's painful.

VIEWTIFUL JOE

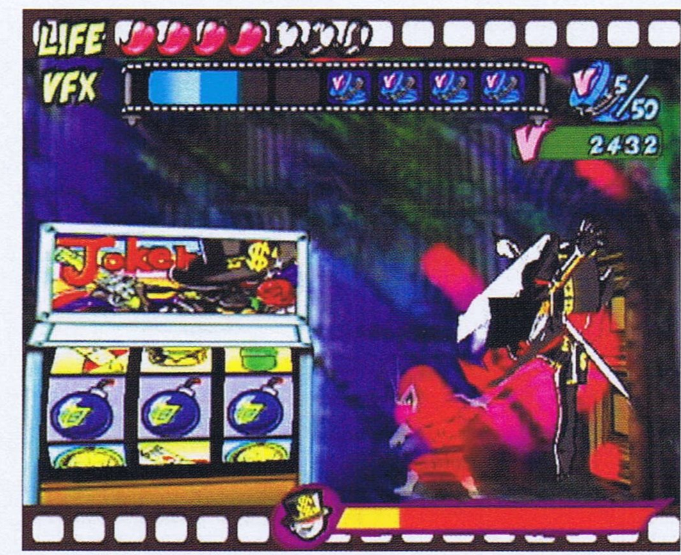
Weird name, beautiful game. We take another long look at Capcom's sleeper hit of 2003…

After our exclusive hands-on a few months ago, we've been very eager to revisit this. E3, with its hordes of sweaty geeks and drunken industry people (well, us), is hardly the ideal environment in which to experience *Viewtiful Joe*, so the chance to sit down with it once again has been most welcome, at least insofar as it's confirmed our initial impressions.

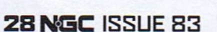
Viewtiful Joe still feels as fresh and engaging as we remember it. The basic, blissfully simple controls (that allow you to move from left to right, dodge, jump, punch and kick) create the false impression that this is a very shallow game. It isn't – as extended play has demonstrated.

As we explained in **NGC**/80, Joe has a number of abilities that open up new fighting possibilities. For example, dodge an attack and enemies will enter a dizzied state. When in VFX mode (a system that gives Joe various properties) the enemy in question will be susceptible to a smack that will launch him across the screen (hopefully into other enemies). Through experimentation, we've discovered these enemies can not only be launched at different trajectories, but, with a well-aimed punch, can be sent flying into interactive scenery that can, potentially, send out a chain reaction of carnage that knocks out multiple foes in one go. Again, we've only had a look at the first few levels so far, but the more we play, the more we discover we can do.

This, of course, is the whole point of the game – to fight 'viewtifully'. At each subsection in a level, you're made aware of how many different enemies you're going to face off



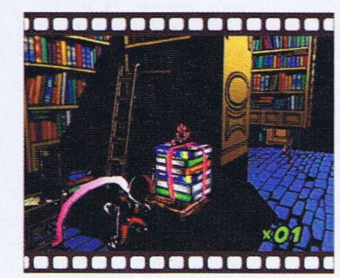
Slow down time and this slot machine becomes dead easy. VIEWTIFUL! Again.





△ The animation is simply exquisite. Just slowing down time and marvelling at the way everything moves is a joy in itself. Hopefully it'll sustain its charm.

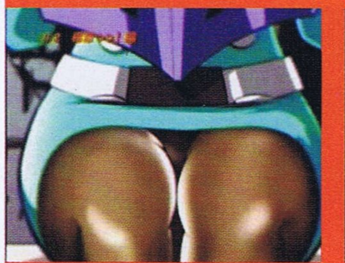

△ Into the wild blue yonder.



△ Quietly now – it's a library, see.

ADS MAGIC!

As usual, the Japanese advertisements are always much better than ours – here's a quick look at a couple of them.


■ In the first one Capcom aired, they demonstrated the hitherto unseen potential of using the VFX – ie, for looking up ladies' skirts.


■ The second commercial shows Joe getting 'stuck into' his lady-friend. He activates his slow VFX to make it a smooch to remember…


■ Unfortunately, he then notices some rotten cabbage stuck to her teeth, and gets the Mach Speed out of there forthwith…

SLOOOW!





The VFX can be used to not only enhance your fighting abilities, but also to change the way you interact with the environment. For example, you can use it to slow down fast-moving obstacles so you can accurately punch them out of the way. You can also use it to spot the right combination on a fruit machine, or to allow you to knock a giant stack of books onto a nearby door-opening switch.

against. If you manage to dispatch them in double-quick time, with maximum efficiency and minimum damage to yourself, you'll be awarded with a rating for your efforts. With Crappy being the worst and Viewtiful being the best.

Fight through a few subsections and you'll then be 'treated' to a tougher mini-boss battle. We can't tell you what the latter bosses are like, but if the first couple are anything to go by, you're going to be in for a tough time. Gun-toting robotic cowboys, pirouetting, sword-wielding magicians (well that's what he *looks* like at any rate), and helicopter gunships all require super-sharp reflexes to deal with.

Each have their own weaknesses that require you to use Joe's VFX meter. The helicopter, for example, requires you to whack the game into slow motion so you can see the approaching bullets before punching them back at the chopper's cockpit. Hopefully, the latter bosses will require you to utilise all three VFX tricks at the same time.

Accompanying all this innovative mayhem are the game's standout visuals. Although the game may look rather flat in the screenshots, worry not. There's just layer upon layer of gorgeous, smooth parallaxing backgrounds, and even some subtle transparent scenery floating over the front of the screen, which gives the game an almost dreamlike quality.

This is one of the few games where you truly feel as though you're controlling a comic-book hero. Almost surreally postmodern in its self-awareness, cheesy dialogue, OTT motion-blur and thick black lines all help to create an old-school beat-'em-up that's without peer.

"THIS IS ONE OF THE FEW GAMES WHERE YOU TRULY FEEL AS THOUGH YOU'RE CONTROLLING A SUPERHERO"

NGC VERDICT

We're still very impressed with all of this. In light of the endless wait for all the other big Capcom titles (where is *Killer 7*? We want to see more of it!), *VJ* makes things much easier to bear. This is a superbly innovative game that, by what we've played so far, promises to surprise in ways we can't imagine.




UK OCT

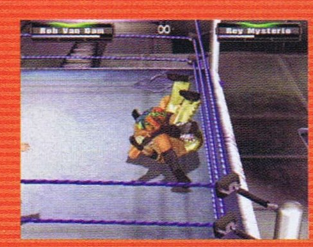
US SEPT

JAPAN NOW

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 3 4 **5**





THE KNOWLEDGE

- Easier controls than previous wrestling games, but even more moves and tactical options.
- In-depth training mode.
- Computer opponents learn your attack patterns.
- Shopzone mode for spending reward points on bonus items.
- Chuck people off skyscrapers.
- Beat up women. (*That's not really a good thing, is it? – Ed.*)

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Yuke's

What have they done before?
WWE Wrestlemania X8 (NGC/72 70%)
A decent first attempt at a Gamecube grappler, paving the way for this nifty follow-up.





△ No, she isn't the girl who parades the number cards between rounds. She's Hulk Hogan's next victim. See the verdict box below for her ultimate fate.

WWE WRESTLEMANIA XIX

Strip down to your undies, oil yourself up real nice, and get to grips with some man-flesh.



Time to lay down just a little more smack, as that bloke from The Scorpion King might once have said.

And, rather than build on the foundations of last year's slightly uneven WWE outing, Japanese wrestling specialists Yuke's have started from scratch. And they've made everything, from the graphics to the control method, considerably more appealing.

It's much easier to pick up and play than previous versions, but a trip to the new training arena reveals that the game hasn't sacrificed any of its depth for the sake of simplicity.

With a bewildering array of bone-crunching moves, and context-sensitive attacks – that change function according to the position of the opponent – it's every bit as huge as any other wrestling title.

Visual enhancements include more blood, more visible injuries and even body language. Wrestlers on the receiving end of a good hiding will look dejected – until they land a few shots of their own, and regain some momentum.

Among the usual selection of Royal Rumbles, cage matches, table bouts and the like, there's now a mode in which you compete to kick your rivals off the top of a construction site. Stomping on their fingers as they cling to the edge usually does the trick.

It's all good, violent fun. Bigger, prettier, and with higher production values than previous wrestling sims. And, it's a rare game that actually has the power to make you wince. Some of the moves can really bring a tear to the eye. Particularly the heel-stomp to the kumquats, with its bell-ringing sound effect and realistic expressions of agony.

> "IT'S A RARE GAME THAT HAS THE POWER TO MAKE YOU WINCE. SOME OF THE MOVES CAN BRING A TEAR TO THE EYE"



△ Kick him in the face and watch him fall to his death. Yay!



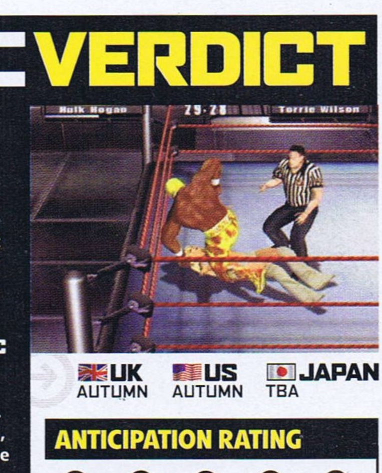
△ Hulk Hogan makes a total Freddie Ljungberg of a fashion error.



△ How to get a girlfriend, WWE-style. Smooth moves, Hulkster.

NGC VERDICT

While this is unlikely to convert any non-believers, grapple lovers will go nuts for it. It's definitely the most accessible game of its kind that we've played, and the WWE fanatics who crept into the NGC office for a quick play gave it the official thumbs-up. Which can't be bad, can it? We'll get one of them to review it, hopefully...

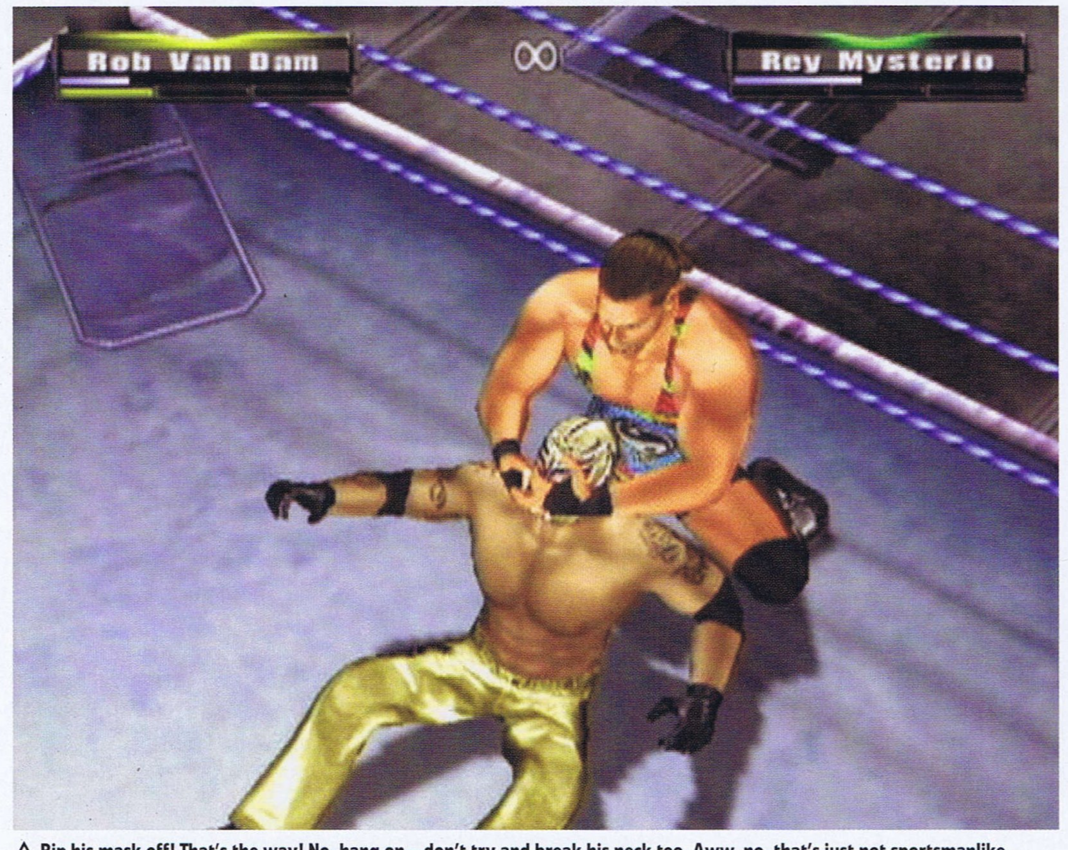


UK	US	JAPAN
AUTUMN	AUTUMN	TBA

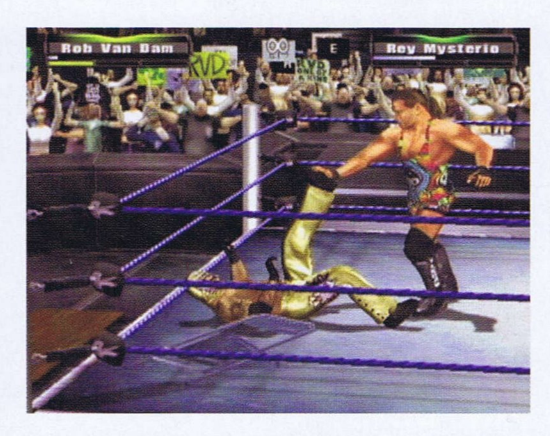
ANTICIPATION RATING

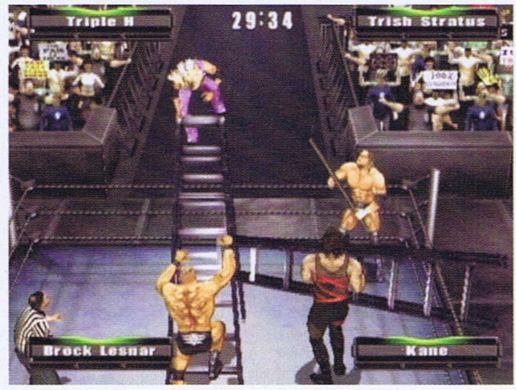
1 2 3 **4** 5

DID YOU KNOW? The title means *Rasslemania X9*. As in the follow-up to *Rasslemania X8*, and not, as somebody suggested, *Rasslemania 19*. Glad that's cleared up, then.

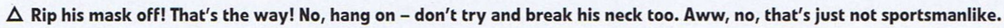


△ Rip his mask off! That's the way! No, hang on – don't try and break his neck too. Aww, no, that's just not sportsmanlike.



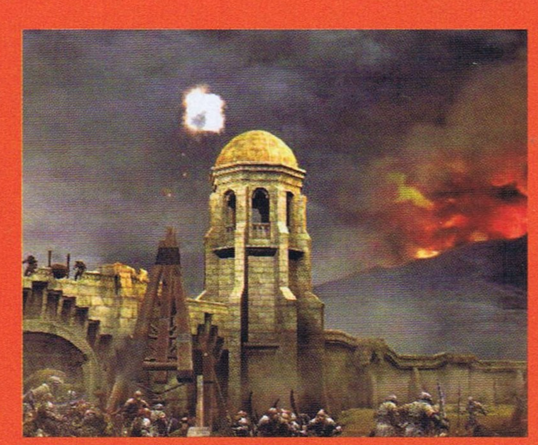


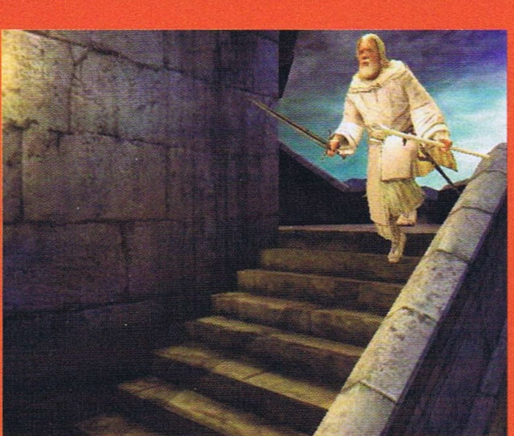
△ The aim here is to keep everyone fighting among themselves while you climb the ladder to get the trophy.





THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE RETURN OF THE KING





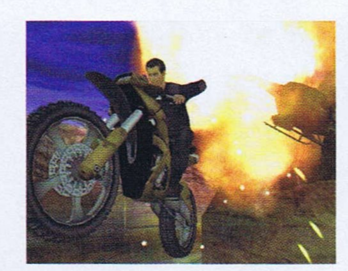
Rings and kings and things, in this film tie-in.

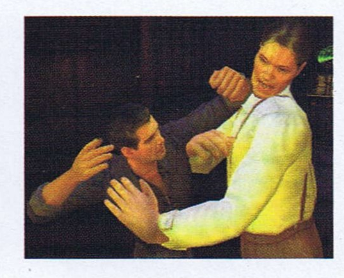


The Two Towers looked astonishing. It really took advantage of its links with the film and offered a properly cinematic gaming experience. It was just a shame it amounted to little more than wading through hordes of orcs, and repeatedly stabbing the A-button. Ah well.

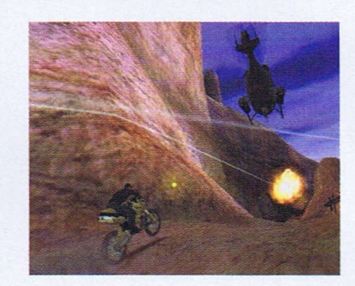
Return of the King, though, aims to fix everything that was wrong with its predecessor. It's still, at heart, a hack-and-slash through swarms of Tolkien's bad guys, but there's really a hell of a lot more to it this time around.

This is mostly because there is a greater choice of characters, and a co-operative mode. There are ten characters available, all of whom take a specified path through the game. But you can team up with a chum (the co-operative mode is a real blast) and take a different route. It's extremely varied, and the ability to customise your character is great. We'll be watching this one very closely indeed.





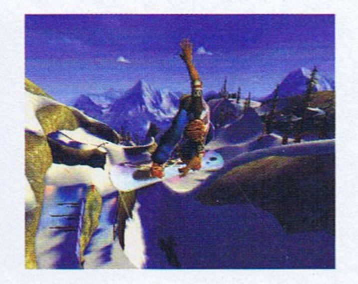
JAMES BOND 007 EVERYTHING OR NOTHING



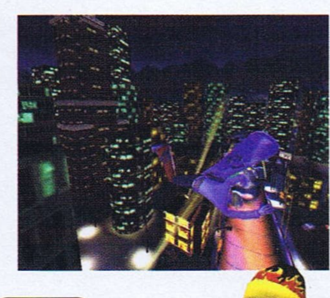
This is looking more impressive with every passing week. *Nightfire* was a step in the right direction, but this looks set to be much, much better. And the move to third-person should offer Bond more moves. We're still not sure about the title, mind, but it *is* suitably Bondian.

We're hoping to get to see the game very soon, so stay tuned. By which we mean, er, stay reading.









SSX 3

The best snowboarding game ever made (until *1080° Avalanche* comes to town, that is) is hoping for a case of third-time lucky. And, by the looks of it, it hasn't much to worry about, taking the winning *SSX* formula (speedy racing and absurd stuntery) and making it, well, funner (*I'm not actually sure that's a word – Ed*).

Gone are the specific tracks of before, and in their place are wide-open mountainsides, which you can make your own way down.

Admittedly, this isn't exactly a wholesale redesign of the game, but with previous *SSX*s being such tremendous fun, we've got every hope that, nonetheless, this will be great. Let's just hope that this time they sort out the frame-rate, eh?





ULTRA RELEASE LIST

The latest on every Cube game in development – updated monthly!

What with all the new games announced at E3 a couple of months back, the Ultra Release List has exploded back into action like some crazed Japanese superhero made of game names (possibly). And look! There are simply millions of games coming our way! (Metaphorically speaking). There's every reason to be cheerful, as your ever-lovin' Cube has some right crackers in the pipeline. Hurrah!

JULY/SUMMER

Gladius	LucasArts
P.N.03	Capcom
Dragon's Lair 3D	THQ
Futurama	SCi
The Italian Job	Eidos
Mace Griffin	Vivendi
WWE XIX	THQ

AUTUMN

Alias	Acclaim
Beyond Good & Evil	Ubi Soft
Bionicle	Lego
Buffy: Chaos Bleeds	Vivendi
Bulletproof Monk	Empire
Charlie's Angels	Ubi Soft
Freestyle Metal X	Midway
F-Zero GX	Nintendo
Harvest Moon	Ubi Soft
Metal Gear Solid	Konami
MoH Rising Sun	EA
Pitfall Harry	Activision
Raven Shield	Ubi Soft
Rogue Squadron III	LucasArts
Robocop	Virgin
Rugby 2004	EA
Soul Calibur II	Nintendo
Sphinx	THQ
Spy Hunter 2	Midway
Starsky & Hutch	Empire
Tak and the Power of JuJu	THQ
Tiger Woods 2004	EA
True Crime LA	Activision
Viewtiful Joe	Capcom
Wallace & Gromit	BAM
XIII	Ubi Soft

WINTER

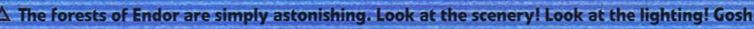
1080° Avalanche	Nintendo
Bad Boys II	Empire
Billy Hatcher	Sega
ESPionage	Midway
FIFA 2004	EA
Final Fantasy	Square
Goblin Commander	Jaleco
Gotcha Force	Capcom
Quidditch World Cup	EA
The Hobbit	Vivendi
James Bond: EoN	EA
Killer 7	Capcom
Mario Kart	Nintendo
Pokémon Box	Nintendo
Pokémon Colosseum	Nintendo
Power Rangers	THQ
Prince of Persia	Ubi Soft
PSO III	Sega
Return of the King	EA
Sonic Heroes	Sega
SSX 3	EA
Starcraft: Ghost	Vivendi
The Suffering	Midway
Teenage MN Turtles	Konami

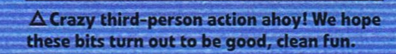
TBA

Animal Crossing 2	Nintendo
Backyard Football	Atari
Broken Sword	THQ
Custom Robo	Nintendo
Dead Phoenix	Capcom
Donkey Kong	Nintendo
Full Throttle II	LucasArts
Game Zero	Nintendo
Geist	Nintendo
Giftpia	Nintendo
Gladiator	Midway
Go-sen: Smash!	MetalSoft
The Great Escape	SCi
Hitman 3	Eidos
I, Gladiator	Acclaim
Kirby's Air Ride	Nintendo
Looney Tunes	EA
Mario 128	Nintendo
Mario Golf	Nintendo
Mario Party 5	Nintendo
Mario Tennis	Nintendo
Metroid Prime 2	Nintendo
The Movies	Activision
New Zelda	Nintendo
Nightmare Creatures	Ubi Soft
Nitro City	Midway
Pikmin 2	Nintendo
Pokémon Channel	Nintendo
Pillage	Zed Two
Pilotwings	Nintendo
Rayman Arena	Ubi Soft
Resident Evil 4	Capcom
Roll-o-Rama	Nintendo
Rogue Ops	Kemco
Starfox 2	Nintendo
Unity	EA/Lionhead
Urban Freestyle	Acclaim
XGRA	Acclaim
Zelda: Four Swords	Nintendo
Zelda: Tetra's Trackers	Nintendo






△ The forests of Endor are simply astonishing. Look at the scenery! Look at the lighting! Gosh.


△ Crazy third-person action ahoy! We hope these bits turn out to be good, clean fun.


△ The Battle of Hoth is now insanely populated. See!

NGC SPECIAL INVESTIGATION

ROGUE SQUADRON III REBEL STRIKE



The best Star Wars game ever made? Could be. Join us as we take *Rebel Strike* for a spin and chat to its creators.

Disembowel AT-ATs and play with Ewoks in this stellar threequel

ENEMIES

Looks like there'll be more Star Wars personalities popping up this time around. In the main grab is Slave 1 – a nice link to the dogfight involving Jango in Attack of the Clones, as the planet shown is Geonosis. There's plenty of supporting drama from Vader and the cast, too.





ON FOOT

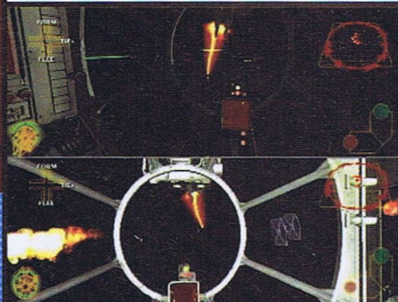
And, while offering you new vehicles to play with, Factor 5 also take them away, as there are on-foot third-person levels, which see you blasting your way through hordes of Stormtroopers and desperately avoiding AT-ATs on Hoth.





MULTIPLAYER!

Hurrah! Rogue Squadron III will not only offer adversarial dogfighting multiplayer treats, it'll also allow you to play through the entirety of Rogue Leader in a co-operative fashion. Are Factor 5 the most generous developers in the business?



VEHICLES

You're not restricted to airborne vehicles this time around. Nope, there's now a plethora of different war machines to commandeer. You'll find yourself stomping around the forests of Endor in an AT-ST, before hurtling between trees at breakneck velocity on Speeder Bikes.







△ There's now much more going on, vehicle-wise.



△ Look! The battle of Yavin, but you're a rebel.



△ Co-op *Rogue Leader* is going to be astonishing.



Cast your minds back, via the temporal abilities of human earth-memory, to the UK launch of Gamecube. Nintendo themselves provided two first-rate titles in the shape of *Wave Race: Blue Storm* and *Luigi's Mansion*, but it was a third-party game that proved to be Gamecube's first 'Killer App', outselling everything else over the Cube's launch period. That game, of course, was *Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader*, a visually astonishing slice of hi-octane Star Wars action.

The game is well over a year old now, but revisiting it, we can't help but still be impressed. It's obviously far from perfect – the game suffers from being too short, and could really have done with a couple more levels leading up to the gob-smacking Battle Of Endor stage – but it's immaculately presented and stuffed full of incredible touches. The sheer amount of detail is mind-boggling, and the emphasis on immediate thrills and responsive handling (rather than sim-like depth) make it a joy to dip back into once it's been 'completed'. It's rarely less than thrilling, even now, and that is surely the sign of a great game.

"IMMACULATELY PRESENTED AND STUFFED FULL OF TRULY INCREDIBLE TOUCHES..."

The threequel, *Rebel Strike*, builds on what's gone before. Needless to say, it follows the same template as *Rogue Leader* – roughly hewn as the original N64 *Rogue Squadron* – but spine-tinglingly throws a whole lot more into the mix, to offer something much more rounded, complete, and, indeed, exciting.

We stealthily infiltrated the headquarters of developers Factor 5 to speak to Julian Eggebrecht, the game's director, about what we can expect from the game, and why it'll blow your collective socks off.

So how does *Rogue Squadron III* differ from *Rogue Leader*? "It's hugely more ambitious", says Julian. "*Rogue Leader* was focused on flight alone,

EWOKS!



It's true! The sinister glassy-eyed little buggers are all over the Endor levels, their primitive weapons still managing to overthrow the technological sophistication of a galaxy-spanning empire of not-inconsiderable evil. You'll be able to command them, after a fashion, by 'activating' their traps via D-pad commands, such as the AT-ST-battering log rams.



DID YOU KNOW? The rebel pilots wore yellow visors at the end of Star Wars instead of clear ones to hide streaking makeup. The day the sequence was shot was Britain's hottest for 400 years!

"*Rogue Leader* looked amazing, but *Rebel Strike* is even more detailed"



△ Order the Ewoks to attack, attack, ATTACK! Silly bears.

△ Excellent cut-scenes are spliced with DVD-quality footage of the films. Hoo-ha!

HOW TO... KILL AN AT-AT

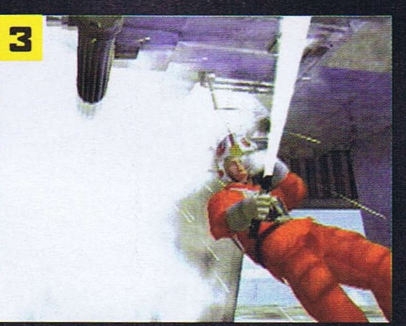
And not by tripping it up with a harpoon gun, or other such unsporting modes of conduct…



1 Firstly, position yourself underneath one of the lumbering behemoths. Then flick the C-stick to deploy your trusty grapple.



2 A touch of B and up you go! Whoosh your way up to the not-particularly-fleshy underbelly of the beast…



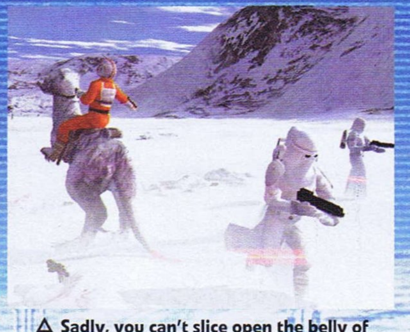
3 … Get yer lightsaber out and give it a good slashing in the guts area, just like Mr Skywalker does in The Empire Strikes Back.



4 Once you've carved a hole, go to the first-person mode and chuck a grenade into exposed metal intestines. Best skedaddle…



△ The asteroid field that surrounds Geonosis. Rocky.



△ Sadly, you can't slice open the belly of your Tauntaun and snuggle down to sleep.



△ The in-cockpit view of the AT-ST. This bit is going to be tremendous fun indeed. Yum.

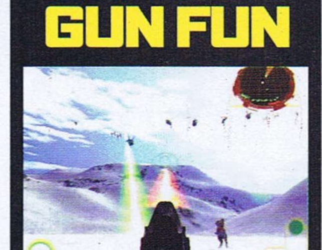


whereas *Rebel Strike* adds to that with AT-ST mech combat and character action, both indoors and outdoors". But that's not all. One of the things that was arguably missing from the two previous *Rogue Squadron* games (and the Episode I-based *Battle For Naboo* on N64) was the social gaming aspect.

"On top of all of that we finally wanted to try multi-player, so a co-op *Rogue Leader* remake immediately sprang to mind, as did a whole range of dogfight, race and other versus modes. We are really excited about finally having the time, and the experience, to be able to recreate all of these different aspects that make up the Star Wars universe. That, and staying as close to the movies as possible".

Time, of course, was something that Factor 5 could possibly have done with more of when developing *Rogue Leader*. Rumour has it that the game was coded in just under a year, which, while being a testament to Factor 5's dedication and talent, is also surely an indicator of Gamecube's developer-friendly innards. "The Gamecube is an easy machine to work with, but it certainly helped us that we were involved in its very early hardware stages. We planned our game engine even before the first prototype existed. That's one of the reasons why we were able to produce the Spaceworld 2000 demo, and subsequently *Rogue Leader*, in those short time-frames", says

GUN FUN



Factor 5's determination to put you in the action at all levels in *Rebel Strike* is hugely admirable. Not content with Tauntauns and AT-STs, you can also man defensive guns, as seen here on the Hoth level. Without the relative safety of a Snowspeeder it's a terrifying experience, with Stormtroopers, walkers and hundreds of TIEs attacking.



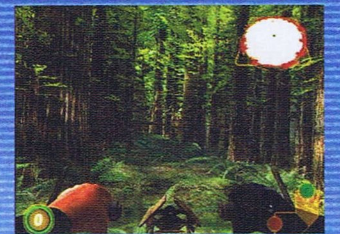
△ Moth-eaten carpet-man Chewbacca joins in the action for the Death Star level. Apparently he's going to somehow be in Star Wars Episode III. Fancy that.



△ More hot Geonosis action. You'll also get to land on the planet and engage in a battle that concludes what happened years before in Attack of the Clones…



△ One AT-AT successfully gutted. Run away before you're squashed.



△ The Speeder Bike section plays best in first-person mode. Fast, it is.

"THE ENGINE HANDLES TWICE AS MUCH AS ROGUE LEADER, WITH BETTER LIGHTING"

Julian. It's even more impressive given the obvious quality of the visuals – *Rogue Leader* looked amazing, but *Rebel Strike* appears to be even more detailed, which is a breathtaking achievement.

But given the longer development period for *Rebel Strike*, and the time spent with the Gamecube hardware, how has development progressed this time around? "Well, a true second-generation title is much harder to pull off," says Julian. "We had to rewrite our complete engine to get the additional boost both visually and performance-wise. The *Rebel Strike* engine handles roughly twice as much, and with much better lighting than *Rogue Leader*.

"What came in handy as a benchmark was the *Rogue Leader* co-op campaign. With that effectively on-screen twice over, we had a pretty good indicator of where we were going. In terms of new levels we focused first on the Endor forest sequences. These were the toughest to pull off, but when we had the forest on screen, everything else seemed to fall into place."

And how has it been, compared to developing for the N64? Julian ponders for a moment. "The Gamecube is more straightforward to program compared to the N64, which makes squeezing out the visuals of this generation so much easier. Sometimes we do miss the times of writing Microcode for the N64's highly complicated vector processor (*Um… – Ed*), but in the end the benefits of a more hardwired pipeline like that of the Gamecube outweigh all disadvantages. Of course, we do love the fact that

CO-OP MODE

One of the most exciting facets of *Rebel Strike* is the much-rumoured inclusion of *Rogue Leader*, in its entirety, as a two-player co-operative game. Good lord! It's the very essence of generosity.

This will differ slightly from the *Rogue Leader* you know and love, though, as introducing two players to the game environment has altered the dynamics significantly. "Our biggest challenge was to redesign the levels for cooperative gameplay, but in the end it proved to be quite fun. There are more enemies, different mission objectives and a lot more", explains Mr Eggebrecht. And astonishingly, it won't arrive on a separate disc – it'll be a multiplayer component of *Rogue Squadron III*. Mother!

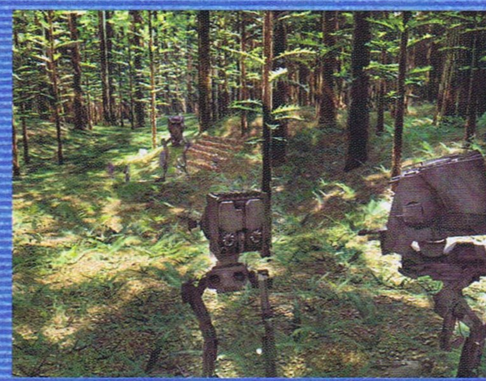
The deathmatch-based multiplayer part of *Rebel Strike* also looks set to be a treat – but don't go expecting a fully-fledged four-player deathmatch. It's not a case of technical limitations, though, rather a decision based on aesthetic concerns. "We don't support four-player gameplay because for flight action the amount of visible screenspace is just too tiny. There are a lot of different versus mode items for two players, though."

DID YOU KNOW? Garrick Hagon, who played Biggs, also appeared with Sir Alec Guinness as the young Prince of Wales in a production of Richard III. Astonishing!





△ Hot two-player action above the floating cloud city of Bespin. This was a rock-hard level for the single player.



△ Those logs, we'd imagine, will soon be rolling downhill and tripping up that foolish AT-ST. Idiot Stormtroopers.







△ It looks literally unbelievable. As in we can't believe it looks this good, but here's the evidence, so we'd better believe.

FIVE ALIVE!



Factor 5 aren't just known for their *Star Wars* titles, they have quite a bit of game history. We pinned down Julian Eggebrecht to tell us about what the company had done before. "We started in Germany in the late 80s on the Amiga Home Computer series. Some readers might remember our early *Turrican* games. From there we jumped onto consoles, and did a variety of work for Konami, LucasArts, Hudson Soft and several other publishers. *Contra/Probotector 2* on the Game Boy was ours, as were *Indiana Jones* for the SNES and *International Superstar Soccer* for the Mega Drive, and of course *Super Turrican 1* and *2* and *Mega Turrican*.

When we jumped onto the PlayStation with *BallBlazer Champions* and *Rebel Assault 2* we also moved to California. Our proximity to LucasArts then led to *Rogue Squadron* on the N64."

And do Factor 5 have a philosophy concerning games? "We like our games to be accessible. No overly complicated control schemes and a lot of fun in a quick few minutes per mission."

This ideal is reflected in Julian's all-time favourite game. "It's *Robotron: 2084* from 1982. Unbelievable gameplay, action, everything. A close second is probably the original *Star Wars* vector arcade game."

Finally, can you give us any hints concerning the future of Factor 5? Rumours, of course, abound that you're working with Nintendo on a new iteration of *Pilotwings*… "The future is always in motion – but sadly we can't talk about anything but *Rebel Strike* at this point!" Curses!

"WE HAVE A VERY COOL AND UNUSUAL-LOOKING LEVEL ON A PLANET CALLED RALLTIR…"

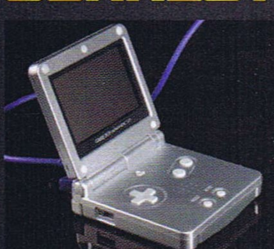
Nintendo finally chose to put in a real soundchip – that was quite a relief."

And frankly, it seems that Gamecube is capable of immensely powerful performance. Just look at that Endor level – the sunlight falls through the tree canopy to dapple the mossy forest floor, while Speeder Bikes zoom by at 60 frames per second. It's amazing to see such a familiar movie scene recreated in such dazzling form.

But other than movie locations, what about any bespoke areas in *Rogue Squadron III*? Both *Rogue Squadron* and *Rogue Leader* offered original levels of Factor 5's own design, that weren't in the films. Vengeance on Kothlis springs immediately to mind, it being gorgeous to look at and brilliant to play, offering multiple objectives and much swapping of vehicles. Are there any surprises on offer? Julian laughs. "Kothlis sure was a stand-out! But we have a very cool and unusual looking level on a planet called Ralltir that is soaked in sand-storms. The sun is setting and you get the feeling of really being in a huge desert city". It really does sound hugely atmospheric.

Along with new locations and new vehicles, *Rebel Strike* also offers new gameplay elements – not least, the chance to run around on foot

CONNECT!



Just like every good Gamecube game worth its salt, *Rebel Strike* will feature some hot GBA connection lovin'. Details are obviously sparse, but one thing we do know is that in multiplayer mode, you can use your GBA to direct your wingmen – meaning your human opponent can't see what you're doing. Nifty, no? We're hoping Factor 5 have more connectivity action up their collective sleeves as well. We'd like to see some kind of *Wind Waker*-style co-operative fun.

Disembowel AT-ATs and play with Ewoks in this stellar threequel



YAVIN A LAUGH

Revisit an area that featured in both the first film and the last *Rogue Squadron* game…



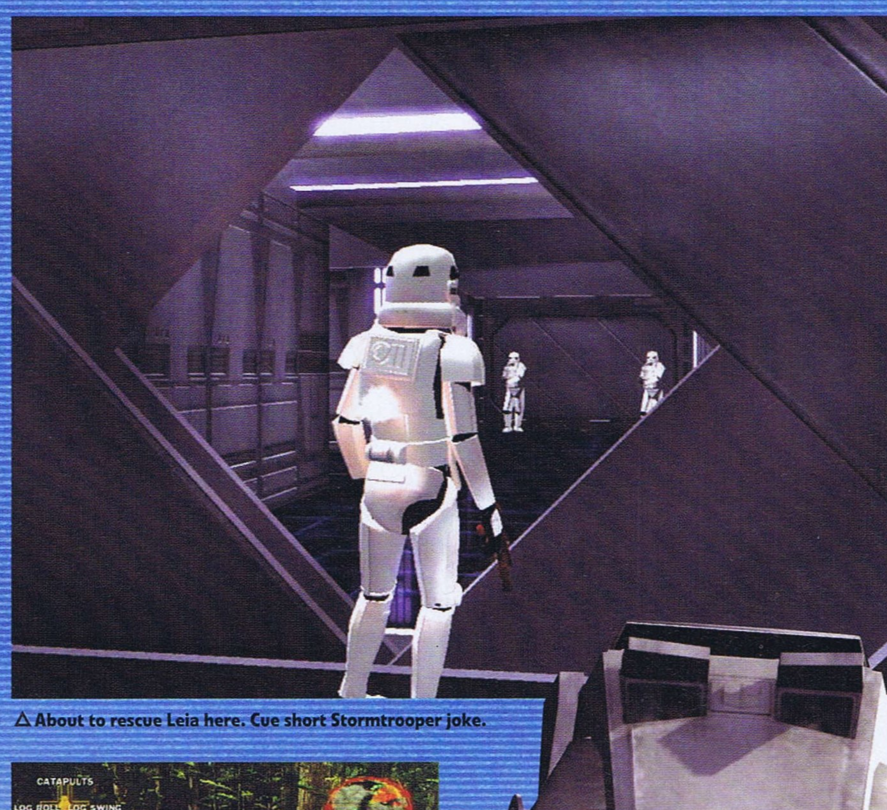
Brilliantly, *Rebel Strike* revisits one of *Rogue Leader*'s secret levels, but turns it completely around. The Yavin level in the previous game saw you playing as Darth Vader leading the invasion on the rebel base. This time around, you're in an X-Wing, trying to escape the Empire's onslaught. We suspect you'll need to buy the rebel transports some time to get away here, as in *Rogue Leader* you had to destroy them before they got free. Let's hope you get to go in the big ziggurat-hanger thing again, eh? That would be, as they say, frickin' ace.



△ You can blast trees over so that they crush your imperial enemies like so much tinfoil. Crush them!



△ Tackling AT-ATs on foot is decidedly terrifying. A little like Jud around deadline. He's a tense man.



△ About to rescue Leia here. Cue short Stormtrooper joke.



△ Seeing this in action made us pant like hot dachshunds fetching sticks on a midsummer day.

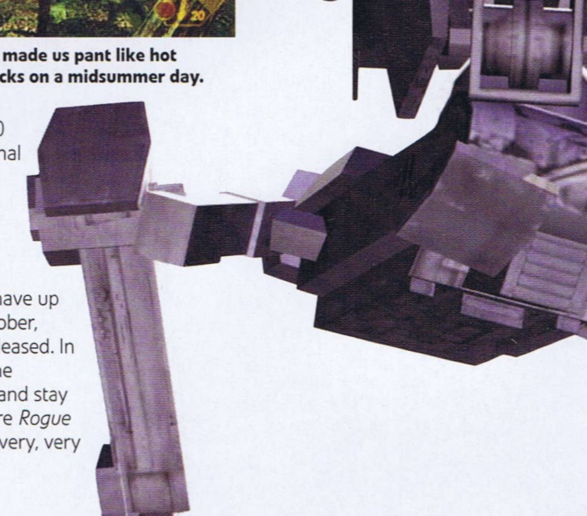
(which, admittedly, seems a little dangerous when there are AT-ATs and TIE Fighters in the immediate vicinity). So how's all that going to work? "It really depends on what the movie action demands," says Julian. "The Death Star Escape is, of course, only on foot because you've played the back end of that in the Millennium Falcon already in *Rogue Leader*. We have a wide mixture of styles – sometimes you leave your craft, jump into a walker; sometimes you stay on foot." From what we've seen of the Death Star level in particular, there seems to be a lot of indiscriminate shooting. Of course, Factor 5 are keeping their cards close to their chest at the moment, but we're hoping that the levels that take place exclusively on foot offer a little more variety and sophistication. And we're sure they will.

But while we're on the subject of possible shortcomings, let's backtrack a little and talk about lifespan some more. The replayability of the medal system notwithstanding, *Rogue Leader* was definitely over too soon. Obviously the generous lashings of multiplayer heaven add a huge amount of lifespan to *Rebel Strike*, but is the single-player going to get a meatier experience this time around?

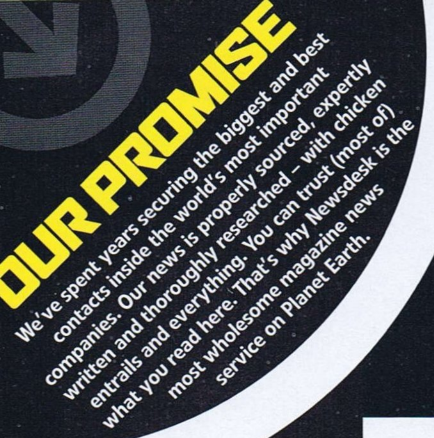
"The single-player game certainly is a lot bigger than *Rogue Leader*'s. We haven't settled on the final amount of missions yet, but it has more variety and diverse levels", says Julian, refusing to be drawn on specifics with rare good-humour.

And it wasn't hard to come up with more Star Wars-based content? "We are quite comfortable with Star Wars. We deliberately chose to stick to the classic movies because they're the ones we relate to the closest. Having said that, there is a mission in *Rebel Strike* in which you are above Geonosis from Episode II. We just loved the visuals and the planet certainly is still there 40 years later. As for original parts", Julian chuckles, "we do think that we have quite a few to offer…"

And we'll get to see exactly what Factor 5 have up their sleeves come October, when *Rebel Strike* is released. In the meantime, enjoy the gorgeous screenshots and stay tuned to **NGC** for more *Rogue Squadron III* goodness very, very soon indeed…

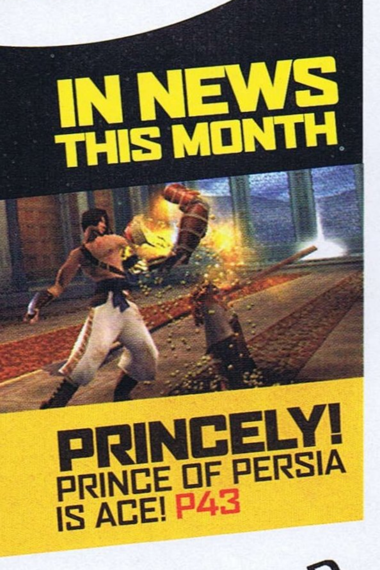


DID YOU KNOW? The original screenplay of Return of the Jedi saw Endor as the Wookiee homeworld, not a place stuffed with midget bears. Oh, Mr Lucas.



NGC BRINGING YOU NEWS FIRST

NEWSDESK



PlayStation®P





NINTENDO SLAMS HONG KONG PIRATES

MEN IN SUITS TAKE MAJOR STEP TOWARDS TAMING THE WILD EAST. BY MARTIN KITTS



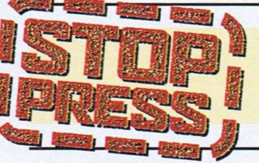
The Chinese and East Asian market has long been flooded with counterfeit software. In some areas, it's almost impossible to buy original games, and pirate copies are often the only ones on sale.

But the situation could be set to change, following a landmark judgement at the High Court of Hong Kong. Having ruled against the well-known games export and console-modifying specialists Lik Sang, the court ordered the company to cough up an interim payment of HK$5m (£383,000) to Nintendo. Legal fees and damages will be determined at a later date. Nintendo brought legal action because Lik Sang was distributing a gadget that is likely to be familiar to a number of **NGC** readers – the GBA Flash Linker.

> **"EVERY GBA TITLE PRODUCED SO FAR HAS BEEN CIRCULATED AMONG PIRATE GROUPS"**

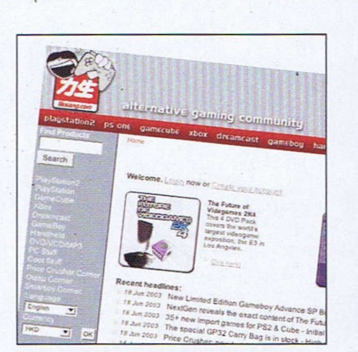
Using the Flash Linker, it's possible to download code from genuine cartridges and write copied games onto reusable 'flash cards', which can then be played on an ordinary Game Boy Advance.

Games are small enough to be emailed or posted on websites. Every Game Boy title produced so far has been widely circulated among pirate groups, and a quick search of



THE MATRIX HAS YOU
Worldwide sales for Ataris' Enter the Matrix game have now topped a massive 2.5m units on all formats. It's thought that the game will need to sell 4m to turn a profit, so it's certainly well on the way.

HUGGY LOVE
As we went to press, Empire Interactive were preparing to



△ A great import site. But now no longer a place to buy GBA copiers.

the internet reveals dozens of sites offering illegal GBA games that have been copied using devices such as the Flash Linker.

Lik Sang claimed that the Flash Linker was a fully legitimate programming tool, and that the company could not be held responsible for any misuse of it by the people who bought it.

LEGAL LOOPHOLE

But, because of a law that states that the person who supplied the means to make unlawful copies is more guilty than the person who actually made the copies, Lik Sang's argument was negated.

Ruling in favour of Nintendo, Judge William Waung said: "I have no doubt that the reason they sell like hotcakes is because they deliver the means whereby a person would be able to steal the games of the plaintiffs (Nintendo) housed inside the Game Boy cartridge of the plaintiffs, and then illegally put the stolen games into the defendants' flash card."

"These devices have been distributed to at least 30 countries around the world," said Jodi Daugherty, Nintendo of America's director of anti-piracy, commenting on the result. "Nintendo will take all steps necessary to stop the manufacturing and distribution of counterfeit Nintendo products.

"Nintendo has the best game developers in the world. They have spent years developing unique and creative games. Their efforts deserve to be protected and respected, not stolen."

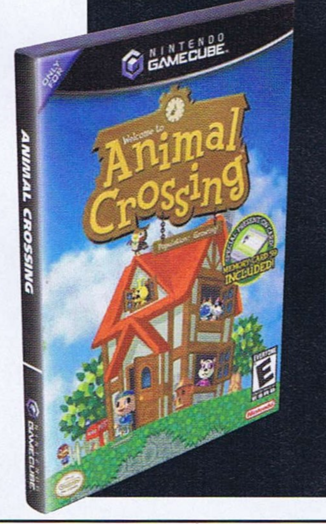


IMPORT UNFRIENDLY

While piracy costs Nintendo a huge amount of money (an estimated £387m last year), import gaming does not. However, Nintendo's lawyers are busy cracking down on the games importing business too, which is a policy we at NGC heartily deplore.

Nintendo are keen to make it as difficult as possible for people to buy games from outside their home territory by putting pressure on import retailers. But it's a legal grey area. Overseas games are stamped with a 'for sale and use only in the country of origin' message, but that's in no way a binding contract.

We say good luck to Nintendo in the quest to sue the pirates off the face of the planet. But until they sort out their release schedule and stop making loyal UK fans wait in vain for games like *Animal Crossing*, leave the importers alone, eh?





△ Our time-travelling camera finds a Gamecube 2 queue in early 2006.

CONSOLE WARS ROUND THREE

The only certainty is that this ain't going to be pretty…



Once again, Nintendo executives are talking a good fight with regards to Gamecube's successor. Public relations supremo Yasuhiro Minagawa – a rather more animated Japanese equivalent of our own David Gosen – is the latest to throw his hat in the ring. "Gamecube arrived in the American market 18 months after PS2. Next time, we'll launch at the same time," declared a confident Minagawa.

Sony is reportedly experiencing difficulties in developing the PS3, which looks unlikely to hit its late-2005 target date, while Microsoft has opted to delay its Xbox follow-up until some time in 2006.

Responding to critics who suggest Nintendo should abandon hardware to become an all-formats developer, Minagawa stated: "Our consoles have never lost money, unlike Dreamcast and Mega Drive, which never recorded a profit.

"People regularly predict our failure in this business, but we can produce characters and games as well as anyone. We're still here. Bandai, Matsushita, NEC and Sega have all gone, and Xbox has already absorbed substantial losses."



△ Wow, it's Gamecube 2! Incredible! Oh, hang on a moment…

SHORT CUTS

GBA 2?

Read the internet rumours, and you could be forgiven for thinking that Nintendo had patented some sort of hard-disc-based multimedia games machine/jukebox device. However, the patent that has the 'net folk so excited actually refers to the original Game Boy Advance, and was filed more than three years ago in Japan. For future reference, patents almost always take this long to appear on the US patent office website, and you'll never find any clues about Nintendo's plans there. It does make interesting reading for retro fans though.



PIKACHU IN DEEP DOO-DOO

The European Commission is on Nintendo's case once again, but this time it's trading partner Topps who are under the microscope. The company makes Pokémon cards, and apparently tried to keep prices artificially high in certain European countries, by preventing imports from regions where the prices were lower. The EC previously fined Nintendo themselves more than £100m for price-fixing.

nveil the world's largest ardboard box sculpture, to romote Starsky & Hutch. The sculpture is a 30m-long version of the Ford Torino from the TV show, and the original Huggy Bear was there at Spitalfields market to officially 'launch' it.

IKARUGA UPDATE Thanks to everyone who sent in entries for the Ikaruga competition. We've had many scores that are genuinely world-class, and we'll announce the winners next issue. Although we've no idea why your average robot would need a £2000 home cinema setup.



DISAGREE WITH MOST WANTED? Then email us at **ngc@futurenet.co.uk** or write to us at **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW and tell us the three games you're most looking forward to. Every month, we'll tally up the scores on the doors and change the list accordingly.

MOST WANTED!

The 25 games our readers are looking forward to more than anything else…



1 MARIO KART

There are no karts in it, and it's about as fast as a lethargic tortoise at the moment. But we can count on Nintendo not to give us a 10mph remix of *Wacky Races* when the finished version is unveiled in a few months' time. And, having two characters on each vehicle is certainly a winning idea. Diddy Kong still needs to be booted clean out of it though. The 'Down With Diddy' campaign starts here.

UK NOV | US 2003 | JAPAN 2003



2 F-ZERO GX

UK OCTOBER | US AUGUST | JAPAN JULY

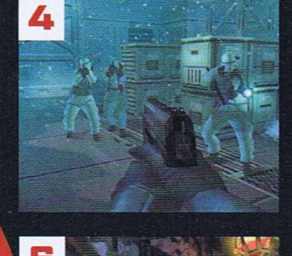
Judging by the latest preview versions we've played, *F-Zero* has sucked all the speed from *Mario Kart* and added it to what was already one of the fastest games we've ever seen. Now it's so quick it ought to come with a health warning. Absolutely terrifying.



3 VIEWTIFUL JOE

UK SUMMER | US SUMMER | JAPAN SUMMER

After discovering his innate hero-ness, ordinary Joe found he could…
Slow down…
Speed attack…
That was vee-YOO-ti-ful!



4 METAL GEAR SOLID

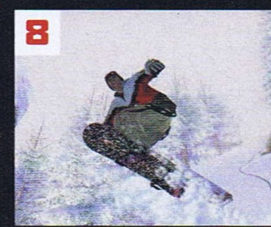
UK DEC | US DEC | JAPAN DEC

In stark contrast to the PS2 sequel, this one always had one of the most absorbing of videogame plots. What it didn't always have were the flashy graphics from the PS2, but Silicon Knights have sorted that out. Cheers, guys. It's going to be special, we'd guess.

5 MARIO GOLF

UK 2004 | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

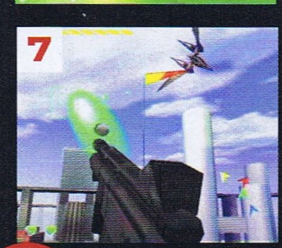
What they should really do is change the name to *Wario Golf*. Then have Wario kicking Mazza around a series of stately gardens and into an open manhole, whereupon the action switches to the sewers for a spot of one-on-one fisticuffs. With hilarious consequences.



6 FINAL FANTASY

UK DEC | US DEC | JAPAN DEC

Seventy hours of random monster encounters and numbers floating out of creatures' heads? Not for us Gamecube players. This isn't *Final Fantasy* as we know it, and the change from epic RPG to four-player action adventure looks like being a certain winner.



7 STARFOX 2

UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

U-G-L-Y you ain't got no alibi. As a wise person once taught us. The developers at Namco are keen to stress that we've only seen a 30 per cent complete version so far. Which begs the question, why on earth show it in this state? When finished, it'll look much nicer.



8 1080° AVALANCHE

UK WINTER | US AUTUMN | JAPAN AUTUMN

Summer sports. Summer not. This is a winter sport, which is as good a reason as any to recycle a bad joke from an old Geordie phrasebook. Groan. Anyway, if you fancy being chased down a mountain by ten million tons of snow, this is your big chance.



9 ROGUE SQUADRON III

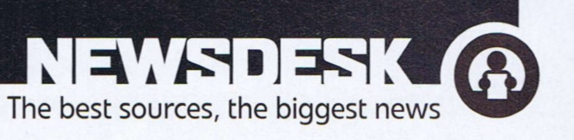
UK DEC | US DEC | JAPAN TBA

In an outrageous display of generosity, LucasArts will be including a complete two-player co-op edition of *Rogue Leader* as a bonus. That's the kind of spirit that makes us want to throw pennies at tramps and sing show tunes in the street.

THIS MONTH
Our exclusive six-page Special Investigation of *Rogue Leader III: Rebel Strike* starts on page 34. And you might have noticed that the cover of this magazine is also heaving with Star Wars goodness. Feel the Force. Go on, feel it. Go on!

#	Game	Comment	UK	US	JAPAN
10	ANIMAL CROSSING	Fingers crossed for the sequel.	NEVER	NOW	NOW
11	PIKMIN 2	More garden-related strategy.	TBA	TBA	TBA
12	BILLY HATCHER	With the catchiest music ever.	XMAS	XMAS	XMAS
13	XIII	Cartoon first-person shooter.	XMAS	XMAS	TBA
14	KIRBY AIR RIDE	Miles faster than *Mario Kart*.	TBA	OCT	TBA
15	KILLER 7	Koroshiya Ichi, anime-style.	TBA	TBA	TBA
16	METROID PRIME 2	Oh yes indeed.	TBA	TBA	TBA
17	HARVEST MOON	Animal husbandry sim.	WINTER	WINTER	AUGUST
18	UNITY	Digital narcotics, kids.	2004	2004	2004
19	DRIVER 3	Vintage muscle cars ahoy.	2004	2004	TBA
20	STARCRAFT GHOST	Third-person stealth action.	WINTER	WINTER	TBA
21	TRUE CRIME LA	*The Getaway* goes Californian.	TBA	TBA	TBA
22	ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS	Oh, come on now.	TBA	TBA	WINTER
23	BEYOND GOOD & EVIL	Very nice. See page 26.	OCTOBER	OCTOBER	TBA
24	PAC-MAN	Gimroo am byth, says Geraint.	TBA	TBA	TBA
25	JAMES BOND: E.O.N.	Third-person Bondage.	WINTER	WINTER	TBA

WRITE TO… MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK



△ Enemies are filled with light, so they glow from the inside – a great effect.

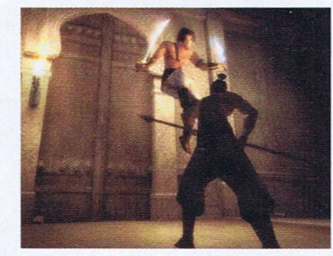
PRINCELY PERFECT

Golden oldie gets a sparkling new coat of paint.

This month we got our hands on an early version of *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*, which is being developed at the same Ubi Soft Montreal studio that made *Splinter Cell*, and uses the game engine from *Beyond Good and Evil*. Incestuous!

It also happens to look exceptionally good, with lots of running along walls, cinematic fight scenes, and fingertip escapes from fiendish traps. The *Sands of Time* part refers to the special powers you can put into use to rewind the action after mistiming a jump, or walking into a rotating neck-chopper.

We'll have plenty more on this one in the near future, but for now a couple of princely screenshots will have to do. The game should be out around November-time.


△ There's a selection of acrobatic fighting moves to use and admire.

BOO, HISS

More about Sony's evil attempt to beat up the Game Boy.



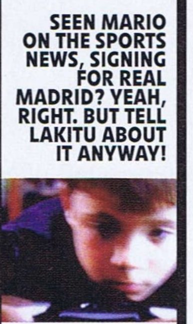
Sony has released more titbits about the PSP handheld, due at the end of 2004. Games for the minidisc-based machine will cost from £20 to £50, with movies and music also released at around the same price as current DVDs and CDs.

The PSP actually isn't the company's first crack at a handheld. Three years ago, Sony had a prototype handheld that stored games on Memory Sticks. Firms of the calibre of Square and Capcom were working on titles for the machine, codenamed ET, before it was eventually cancelled. Nintendo executives remain unconcerned by the threat, at least in public, predicting an installed base of around 60 million GBAs by the time PSP is released.

That would mean the PSP would have to play catch-up with a market leader in a position of almost unassailable dominance – much like the N64 versus the PlayStation, or Gamecube against PS2, except with an even more daunting task ahead.

LAKITU'S LENS

SEEN MARIO ON THE SPORTS NEWS, SIGNING FOR REAL MADRID? YEAH, RIGHT. BUT TELL LAKITU ABOUT IT ANYWAY!



SPOOKY GBA

Ben Peers from Redhill was watching BBC1's new X-Files/Buffy-like series, Strange, when he spotted this one. The GBA in question was fitted with an Afterburner, and when a 'freaky old lady' touches its owner's arm, the screen flickers, thereby proving the lad hasn't inherited his father's 'demonic tendencies'. Funnily enough, our Afterburner also flickers for no apparent reason, but we'd imagine that's because of a dry solder joint. Not demons.

WRITE TO LAKITU'S LENS, NGC, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

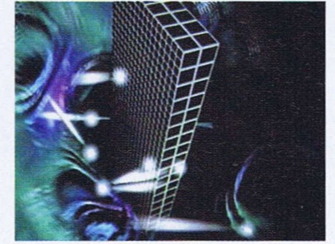
Our favourite entry (with photo or video evidence) will win a random GBA or Gamecube game.

RAVING UNITY

Shoot-'em-up guru Jeff Minter is to demo his eagerly awaited Gamecube title *Unity*... at a combined village fete/rave near Carmarthen in Wales.

The game's unique visual effects are sure to synchronise perfectly with a nice dose of heavy-duty trance music, and they'll be displayed on a monster projection screen all through the night. So everyone can marvel and be suitably awed.

We'll let you know how the whole thing went next month.


△ Nothing to actually 'play' as yet, but it looks incredible.


△ This is the light synth built into the game. Gorgeous, it is.

Images: Jeff Minter/James Kracht/www.medwaypvb.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

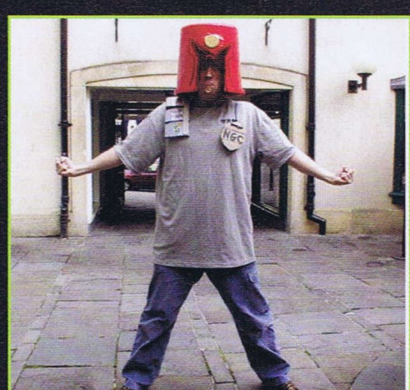
VIRTUAL REALITY

NINTENDO GAMING MOMENTS 'COME TRUE'.

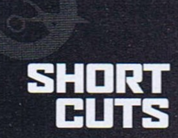
THIS MONTH Bringing law to the lawless in the Cursed Earth (Bath)



THE TEST
Having constructed a suitable symbol of Judgely authority from a broken bin and a half-eaten Rich Tea biscuit, our volunteer sets out in search of fatties and perps.



RESULT
"I am the law, creeps! Erm... by drokk, perps, dead or alive you're coming with me! Somewhere there's a crime happening. Oh, bugger."



SHORT CUTS



ACCLAIM GO COMIC

Acclaim have bagged the rights to create games of The Red Star and 100 Bullets, both well-respected comics. The Red Star concerns an alternate near-future Russia, one that has combined sorcery with military might in a tale of epic combat. 100 Bullets is a twisty-turny noir thriller concerning the mysterious Agent Graves, who issues wronged parties with a gun, and 100 untraceable bullets, with which they can exact revenge. Long-term readers may remember that Acclaim have created games from comic properties before, with *Turok* and *Shadowman*.

FANG-TASTIC! (DIES)

17th July will see a Japan-only release of a special edition GBA and carry case for Hideo Kojima's solar-powered vampire-hunting game, *Boktai*. The GBA comes in fancy red and black – a little like Dracula's cape, if his cape were a portable games machine – and the carry case is, brilliantly, a miniature coffin. There's also a *Boktai* comic included, written by Kojima himself. Crazy.



△ A vampire, yesterday. Did you know that, in the original novel, Dracula can walk in daylight?



△ Buffy, plainly, is the best fighter – apart from reformed vampire Spike, who's a bit mean.



△ Willow is physically weak but can use fancy magic. Nice jeans there, love.

BUFFY: CHAOS BLEEDS

Buffy fights vampires! Not original, but surprisingly promising.



We got a good play of Eurocom's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds* this month, thanks to publishers Vivendi. Based, funnily enough, on the hit show of the titular undead-duster (now sadly finished, sob), the game takes place during the events of Season 5. Y'know, the one with Glory, and the death of Buffy's mum (*cheery, then – Ed*). Anyhoo, it's a tidy little affair, which allows you to play as a number of different characters from the show.

For instance, the first level starts with an assault on the Magic Box (Giles' shop) by numerous vampires. You start off as Buffy, then flip between Xander, Willow and Spike. Each character has their own abilities (magic for Willow, and so on) and control is smooth and responsive, with plunging a stake through a prone vamps' heart being particularly pleasing. It's a little repetitive to begin with, as there's little respite from the constant combat. But it's nice to see how regular guy Xander copes, given that he's got no superpowers.

Chaos Bleeds, nonetheless, is looking very promising, and we'll be bringing you a proper Special Investigation on it next month.



FINAL FANTASY DELAYED

Claim that minor delay will produce better game. Hmm.



△ It's looking lovely. And it's great to get a *Final Fantasy* game at long last.



The release date for Square's hugely promising *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles* has slipped. Due for release in Japan on 18th July, it's now fallen back to 8th August. Apparently, when it was showcased at E3, the game didn't quite meet Nintendo's stringent quality control standards, with load times being too long (ie, they weren't non-existent), and an erratic frame-rate being the main culprits.

In theory, the extra time should allow Square to get things sorted out (*Crystal Chronicles* will hit a constant 30 frames-per-second when finished, it seems). Of course, the main interest here is whether or not this delay will affect the US and UK releases. Given that we're currently promised a vague December-ish PAL emergence for the game, we're fairly confident that it will still hit us before the end of the year.

More exciting release *Final Fantasy* release-date-based news as we hear it!





△ It's a shame extra players are going to need a GBA each.



△ One player holds the fancy crystal, the others protect him. How jolly fine.

RESI MADNESS
Capcom are releasing a Biohazard Collector's Box in Japan, which contains eight discs and two memory cards, wrapped up in a fancy box. It incorporates Resident Evils 0, 1, 2, 3 and Code Veronica, plus Wesker's Report File 1 and 2.

VIEWTIFUL SCORE
By the time you read this, Viewtiful Joe will be out in America, and we'll be playing it to the very death for an import review in the next issue. At the time of writing, Famitsu – Japan's premiere games mag, endlessly touted as the

WAS THE N64 BETTER THAN GAMECUBE?

Gamecube is *brilliant*. Let's get that straight. But has it fared better than the N64?

In a little over a year (a year! Remember just how long we waited for *Ocarina of Time*?), we've been treated in the UK to a new *Mario* and *Zelda*, and a blistering resurrection of a long-dormant franchise in *Metroid Prime*, plus a clutch of other great first-party titles (*Smash Bros*, *Wave Race*, *Pikmin*, and *Luigi's Mansion*). And that's not forgetting Silicon Knights' excellent *Eternal Darkness*.

There have also been some utterly cracking third-party games, in the shape of *Timesplitters 2*, *Super Monkey Ball*, *Rogue Leader*, *Resident Evil*, *Burnout* and *Splinter Cell* – to name but a few. And yet people, bafflingly, still manage to moan about the Gamecube line-up, and then moon soppily over the halcyon days of the N64.



△ The *Wind Waker*. Beautiful, brilliant, astonishing. But better than *Ocarina*?

> **"NOSTALGIA IS A VERY DANGEROUS THING, AND IT HAS A WAY OF DECEIVING AND CLOUDING ALL OUR MINDS"**

ROSE-TINTED

Nostalgia is a very dangerous thing, and it has a way of deceiving and clouding all our minds. The N64 was a magnificent machine. And now that it exists perfectly trapped in aspic, away from the third-party issues and bad publicity that dogged it during its five short years of existence, what people remember about it is the sheer quality of its best games. And it's this state that has reflected badly on the Gamecube.

But, given where we are now with Gamecube, if you look back at the same period in the N64's lifespan, things are throw into sharp relief. There was *Super Mario 64*, *GoldenEye*, *Mario Kart*, *Lylat Wars*, *Pilotwings*, *Wave Race 64*, *Turok*, *Blast Corps* and *ISS 64*.

And that, to be brutally honest, is a list of pretty much all the top-tier games of the time – and shockingly, in the equivalent Directory, there are three pages of games. We've got eight in this issue (to break that down, that's about 46 games compared to around 128). Things really are better, right? Right.

QUANTUM LEAP

And yet there's an alarming perception that Gamecube is offering weak reiterations of past glories. It's true that *Mario Sunshine* and *Zelda* don't break the new ground that *Super Mario 64* and *Ocarina of Time* did, but those first two games are tremendous in their own right.

The same also goes for the old *Timesplitters* vs *GoldenEye* argument. They're both very different games, despite their shared heritage, so why should *TS2* be unfairly found wanting in *GoldenEye*'s shadow? (This kind of illogical comparison also happens cross-platform – with *Metroid* vs *Halo*, for example).

What people are perhaps forgetting is that nobody knows when the next quantum leap in gaming will take place. We had it with evolution from the SNES to the N64, and 2D to 3D, as *Mario 64* was the first 'proper' 3D game, but the crossover from N64 to Gamecube (and PSone to PS2) has merely seen a refinement of previous developments. Does that make *Mario Sunshine* a less relevant game than *Mario 64*? Only in terms of history, perhaps (and, of course, in terms of which game you prefer).

The only true judgement we can make about the merits of Gamecube compared to the N64 will be when we're playing Nintendo's next console. But for now, Gamecube is healthier than the N64 ever was.



THE CLASSICS
Ah, the classics. We still get *GoldenEye*, *Perfect Dark* and *Mario Kart* out for a lunchtime punt, even now. But how about you lot? Does your N64 sit mouldering in the corner as your shiny Cube gets all the love? Is *Wind Waker* as engrossing to you as *Ocarina of Time*? And what about cartridges, eh?

country's 'gaming bible' – has given the game 33/40, enough to earn it a gold award.

GOLDENEYE CUBE
Rumours abound that Electronic Arts have acquired the rights to port GoldenEye over to the Gamecube, or even produce a sequel to the top Bond shooter. The latter option is obviously more realistic, but quite frankly, we'll eat our giant hats if any of this is true. The internet, eh? Tsk. An elephant's graveyard of flim-flam, if you ask us. Still, it would be nice to have Mr Bond back. Wouldn't it? (Yes – Ed)

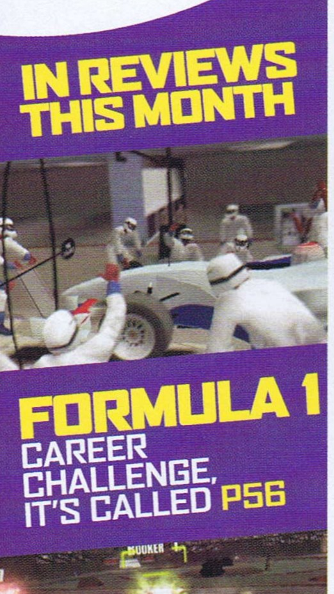
OUR PROMISE

Our reviewers are the most talented and knowledgeable Nintendo fans in the business. We don't only play games at work – we play them at home too, just like you. We ensure that we've played games through to the end so that we can give you a proper verdict – and one that saves you from wasting money.

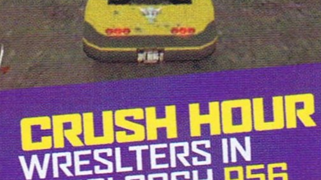
NGC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!

REVIEWS

IN REVIEWS THIS MONTH



FORMULA 1 CAREER CHALLENGE, IT'S CALLED P56



CRUSH HOUR WRESLTERS IN CARS! GOSH P56



GBA REVIEWS
GOLDEN SUN P64
SEGA SMASH P65
STUNTMAN P65
MICKEY/BUFFY P66
SEGA ARCADE P67
DK COUNTRY P68

WHAT IS PAL?
PAL is the UK's broadcasting standard. When you buy a Cube here it will be PAL. When you buy a Cube in the US or Japan it'll be NTSC – a different broadcasting standard, and the reason the two don't mix. Import games are NTSC games.

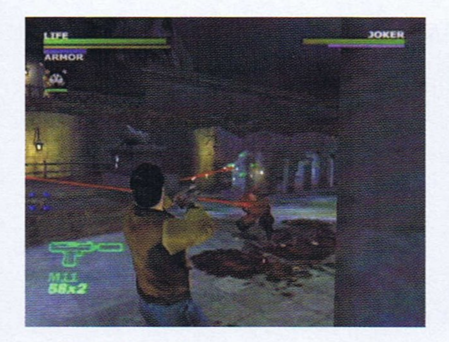


WARIO WORLD

Mario's alcoholic alter-ego gets his own Gamecube game. And it's made by Treasure, to boot! P48



WARNING! SPOILERS AHOY! OUR REVIEWS CONTAIN SENSITIVE INFO!



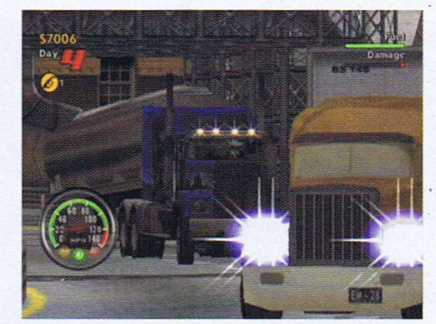
DEAD TO RIGHTS

EA kindly publish this tale of a man and his face-eating dog in the UK. Wasn't that nice of them? P54



SONIC ADVENTURE

Now suffixed with a 'DX', this director's cut of a Dreamcast 'classic' gets the Gamecube treatment. P57



BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS

Yes, this is a trucking sim. And yes, it's full of inbred hillbillies. The world of videogames is rich and varied. P62

HOW IT WORKS...

Our reviews are the most comprehensive on Earth. We devote more pages to the games you want to know about, and give you loads of detail. And in the new **NGC**, things just got better. Our Field of Play and Event-o-meter regulars will pinpoint a game's strengths, yet our verdicts remain the most honest around.



SPEED KINGS

One of a frankly unbelievable two motorbike racing games from Acclaim this month. We never saw two *Turok*s in one issue. Tsk. P58



POKEMON

Ruby and *Sapphire* hit the UK. Time to get glued to your GBA all over again. Bless. P69

① GET INTO THE GAME

■ The quickest and smartest way for you to get started...



② FIELD OF PLAY

■ The game's best bit taken apart and lovingly analysed...



③ EVENT-O-METER

■ The good bits, the bad bits – all in handy graph-form...

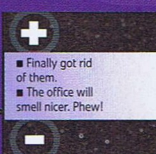




THE SCORE BAR

■ The verdict explained for you...

PROS AND CONS
Because we think it's important to provide you with balanced reviews, we'll sum up the game simply with some plus and minus points.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Not all games are good (unsurprisingly) – so you'll be wanting to know what the alternative is. We'll provide suggestions here.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...
World of Munt
Stinksoft
NGC/456, 806%
The real stench of a pubescent boys' underwear drawer. Mmm, munty.



VISUALS AND SOUNDS
Gamecube sends PS2 packing. Do the visuals and sounds show this?

MASTERY
How well does the game make use of the Cube's startling hardware?

LIFESPAN
Will it last you a lifetime or a couple of minutes? Here you'll find out for sure...

VERDICT
We don't throw scores around – we give a game what it deserves. Here you will find the definitive verdict as to whether you should bother purchasing a game.

8 VISUALS
The office beauty quotient is raised by them leaving.

8 SOUNDS
No more Irish hooting or wailing about crashed Macs.

4 MASTERY
Luckily, monkeys aren't picky about what they do.

7 LIFESPAN
They'll soon come crawling back. No jobs for them here, though.

VERDICT
Geary and Jud Bog Off And Leave Us In The Dwang is only ever sporadically entertaining. Gits.

NGC
58



OUR SCORING SYSTEM

NGC STAR GAME

0-24	25-49	50-74	75-89	90+
■ Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured, this is crud.	■ Disappointing, stashed with faults and likely to be short on any quality.	■ Some great bits, some not-so-great bits. Decent but definitely problems.	■ Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.	■ Rarely awarded, you'll know a 90+ is absolutely essential.

MEET THE NGC TEAM

They might know their gaming onions, but they're still hideous freaks.



JES
Jes somehow lost two members of staff this month. "One is unfortunate", he said, "but two is just careless. But they're both idiots anyway."



JUD
Jud packed up his toy Sherman this issue and minced off into the horizon (ie, downstairs). The office will be a less obsessive place without him.



DAN
Dan, too, left us this month. We'll miss him plenty, if by 'miss him plenty' you mean 'thank God the wetbrained simpleton has finally gone'.



MARTIN
Generally unpleasant.



GERAINT
Geraint became a proud father this month. Well done! Not bad for a bloke who looks like a 12-year-old scarecrow with a double hernia.



PAUL
Highlight of the week: Paul on the cover of Good Woodworking Magazine (really). We always said he was – wait for it – a plank. Thangyouverymuch!



JIM
Shadowy man of the night Jim stood in for child-spawning Geraint this month. He used the sewer entrance to get to work, just like Angel.



RICH
From the bit of Wales that Geraint isn't from, Rich is similarly grotesque and beetle-browed. His heroes are Harry Secombe and Jethro.

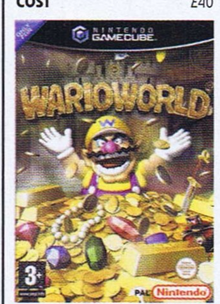
△ At last, Wario gets his turn in the spotlight. First the lovely *Wario Ware, Inc*, and now this. Who needs that goody-goody plumbing fella, anyway?

WARIO WORLD

Greedy? Yes. Coarse? Certainly. Evil? We think not. And here's Wario in his own full-price ware.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	TREASURE
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	10
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



GET INTO THE GAME

Repeat this mantra: greed is good.

I'M-A GONNA *WEEEEEEN!*

Subtlety? Tactics? Wario's heard of them. Possibly. But he'd rather just make with the fists and get on with some serious pummelling. The first few enemies you come across are utter lightweights and can be scattered with one punch each, but you're soon up against tougher foes. You can carry on wading through them, but the smart thing to do is to knock one of them out – you'll see little cartoon stars circling above it – then pick it up and make with the special move. The Wild Swing-Ding's devastating but takes a while to get going, and you'll quickly find yourself defaulting to the Piledriver. And once you've wiped them out, don't forget to pick up all those lovely dropped coins. Either run round and pick them all up, or hold down Z and watch in glee as Wario opens wide his cavernous maw and sucks the coins in.





This has been a long time coming. After numerous guest appearances and bit-parts, plus a few of his very own handheld outings, Wario is finally deemed fit for his own game on a proper console. Lesser characters might exclaim, "I'm not worthy!" Not Wario, though. He knows for sure he's up to the job and, we're delighted to report, he's hit the Cube with typical aplomb. Why, didn't you just know when you heard him announce that he was-a Wario and that, indeed, he was-a gonna ween, in *Mario Kart 64*, that here was a chap who deserved a whole stack of his own games? Hell, he deserves his own movie, with Danny DeVito in the title role. But for now let's be grateful that he's been given room to stretch out and show us what he's capable of.

WARIO WORLD

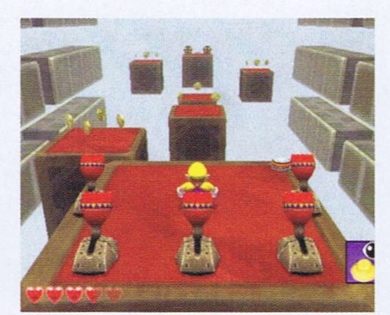
Punchy, pounding portly fun. That's fun with a capital FUN



Δ Need to get across a spiky floor? Find a creepy lion marionette and cling to its sticky tail.



Δ So this is Christmas? Feels like summer in this hideously airless new office. Yerk.



Δ Moving platforms and a bunch of levers. Prepare for brain-hurtage.



Δ Playing *Wario World* is, we promise you, a lot better than a solid kick in the baubles.

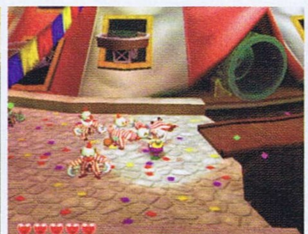
OH, WHAT A LOVELY WARIO

Madder than a snake in a dress and with a ludicrous set of levels to match…



WHOOOO! SPOOKY!

A creepy world of skeletal beasties and things that go bonk in the night. And outsized doorknockers that fire stuff at you. Scary stuff, but not as much as…



AIEEE! TERRIFYING!

Yes. Scary Clown World, and it's disturbing and hilarious in equal measure. Beating up crowds of whey-faced freaks feels good, however.



BRRRR! CHILLY!

There are only a few basic monster types, but they look different in each level. Once you've seen a snowman-bird, your life will be complete.



ERRR! BEANSTALKY!

Probably the least inspired of Wario's worlds. Big beanstalk and not a lot else. But you get to fling magnet-monsters at metal plates to climb up them. Yes.



YOW! CONFUSING!

The mirror mansion's quite nasty in places, with bits where you can only see what you're doing by looking at a reflection. Head… hurts! Must lie down.

Splendidly, those code-ninja loons at Treasure have done Wario proud. This is not a subtle gaming experience. It's big, brash and extremely silly in places. You can't have subtlety in a game that at one point demands that you fling clowns at moving targets in order to shut down a clown-powered electric fence, can you?

"YOU CAN'T HAVE SUBTLETY IN A GAME THAT AT ONE POINT DEMANDS THAT YOU FLING CLOWNS AT MOVING TARGETS"

So forget about head-scratchy puzzles. *Wario World* may look at times like some Wario-flavoured variation on a theme by Mario, but it's definitely not that. It's half platformer, half beat-'em-up, and half insane cartoon. Yes, we know that makes three halves, but what are you going to do, eh?

The setup, like so much of *Wario World*, is extremely simple. Someone has nicked all Wario's treasure and turned it into monsters. Wario wants it back, so rather than come up with a cunning plan he simply wades in and beats the hell out of everything. The approach is somewhat similar to *Mystic Heroes*, but *Wario World* does it so much better. Small enemies can be dispatched



WAAAAH!

It's excellently hard to actually get yourself killed in *Wario World*. Even if you fall off the edge of one of the levels, you don't die. You're just dropped into a dungeon where you have to find an escape spring hidden in a box. While ghostly dog-head things called Unihorns steal your coins. And the rest of the boxes contain bombs, by the way. Happy hunting!



Δ Once you've done the hitting, collect the coins. They're important.

"Wario spins like some psychotic hammer-thrower"



△ It's amazing, the strange things that can brighten up our days and make us smile despite all the bad things out there in the world. These monsters are called Fattingtons. This made us chuckle. Rather too much, truth be told.



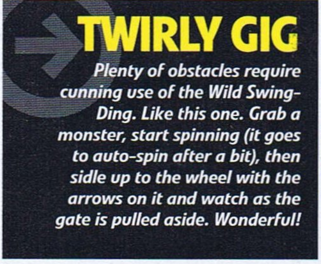
△ What trickery is this? Evil monsters that can only be seen in mirrors? They must be anti-vampires! Flee before they pump blood into you!



△ Whatever these are supposed to be, we're scared of them.



△ Ha ha ha ha ha ha haha ha ha hahahaha ha ha haaa! This is fun.



TWIRLY GIG

Plenty of obstacles require cunning use of the Wild Swing-Ding. Like this one. Grab a monster, start spinning (it goes to auto-spin after a bit), then sidle up to the wheel with the arrows on it and watch as the gate is pulled aside. Wonderful!











with a couple of punches, but it's when you take on the larger ones that the fun really starts. You can knock enemies out cold, pick them up and then…

Well, you could fling them at a wall. Simple and satisfying, but it won't kill bigger baddies – that requires a charged throw. You could kill a lot of birds with one bad-guy-shaped stone and fling it at its comrades. Most efficient, and the baddie-chucking's vital at some points when you're faced with targets to hit that you just can't reach by yourself.

Yet we're still in the realms of run-of-the-mill methods of monster-mashing. The real fun starts when you start to seriously mistreat them. Grabbing an out-cold enemy, jumping in the air and hitting R unleashes an excellent and explosive Piledriver move that, if executed on top of a horde of bad guys, can take out a load of them in one go. Lovely. Alternatively, grab one and start rotating the analogue stick for what's referred to as a Wild Swing-Ding, whereby Wario spins like some psychotic hammer-thrower and wipes out anything unfortunate enough to connect with his business end.

Both of these moves look great and, brilliantly, have more uses than simply bringing down the monster population of *Wario World*. The swing-ding-thing can be used, courtesy of friction, to spin large wheels that open important gates, and the Piledriver's essential for getting into some of the bonus stages.

> **"BADDIE-CHUCKING IS VITAL AT SOME POINTS, WHEN YOU'RE FACED WITH TARGETS YOU JUST CAN'T REACH YOURSELF"**

Yes indeed, the bonus stages. The major part of the game consists of a lot of gung-



WELCOME TO MY WORLD

"Eet's-a me! A-Wario! And I'm-a…" Oh, the devil take this silly impersonation of videogame characters. The first three levels.



GO GET 'EM!
An easy introduction to Wario World's multifarious delights. Make with the fists and do some hitting. Throwing stuff is optional.



JUST WARMING UP
It soon hits its pace and you're surrounded by monsters, all wanting a jolly good bashing. Time for a tasty Piledriver.



BOSS FROG
Even the boss is easy. Forget about weak points. Just pummel him till he drops, Piledrive him and repeat two more times. Sorted.



LAYING RUIN
The second level and things are getting a bit tougher. More monsters and they're harder. Just keep on hitting things.



STICKY BALLS
You'll see a lot of glue-balls. Good for reaching hidden spots, and Wario looks very silly, clinging on with his portly frame.



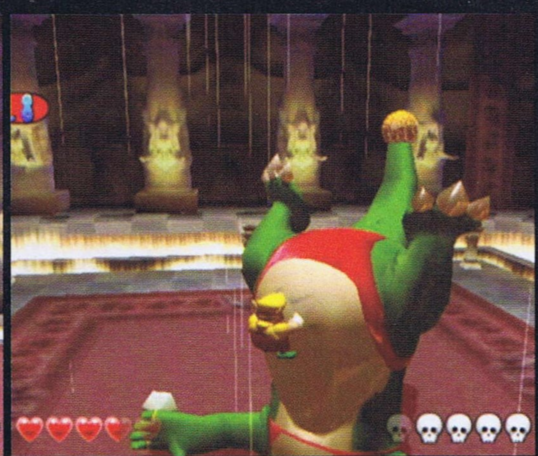
OLD COG, NEW TRICKS
You also learn how to open gates by spinning enemies against big arrowy wheels. It's cruel but kind. Except for the kind bit.



THE BIG BOSS
The third level's a great big boss battle. And just look at the size of that thing. But size, as we know, is entirely relative.



THE BIGGER THEY COME…
No special approach needed for this one – just keep on battering it and stay out from under its feet. It'll fall, and then…



THE HARDER THEY FALL
Hoist it up in the air for a Piledriver finish. It takes five to kill it – beware of the shock waves when it recovers from each one.

"A seemingly indestructible pig in a red posing pouch"

FIELD OF PLAY

Keep an eye out for these things if you wanna suck seed…

DON'T STAY AWAY…

…from that trapdoor. There's something down there, and it's one of those all-important red diamonds that you'll need to get to the end-of-level boss fella. You may also find some treasure. Wario likes treasure. And while they keep on coming up with gems like this, we like Treasure too. Mad Japanese loons that they are.

CLOVE STORY

Wario gets his health in garlic form, but garlic doesn't just grow on trees, you know. Fittingly he has to buy it from special vending machines of a very strange shape, and thanks to the laws of economics, the more you buy the higher the price goes. Still, you at least get to punch the money-grabbing hardware before it coughs up a clove. Have some, usurer!



△ A moving glue-ball, gaps with spiky balls in, and an annoying tumble if you get it wrong. Cue swearing.



△ This felled dinosaur bears quite a resemblance to Prince Tricky. Hence the quite unnecessary cruelty we're dishing out.



△ Look! There's another one! Can you see the similarity? Let's hurt him and fling him at that great big button.

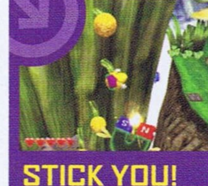
ho running around, beating up monsters and collecting Wario's beloved coins and treasure. And, for sure, it's a majorly major part of the game, but throughout all the stages you keep happening upon trapdoors that conceal vital little bonus levels. They're vital because, upon completion, you're rewarded with a snazzy red diamond, and you need red diamonds to unlock the special end-of-level trapdoor that leads to the boss confrontation. Look, we don't make the rules, okay?

While the above-ground portion of *Wario World*'s a delightfully punch-drunk affair, the bonus rounds require a lot more finesse. At the very least you require precision platforming skills. More often you need platforming skills and a large brain so that you can jump around and complete some block-moving puzzle simultaneously. And that's just your basic bonus rounds. The bigger ones, concealed beneath tough trapdoors that you need to Piledrive your way through, can be a lot nastier – reminiscent of those surreal *Mario Sunshine* challenge levels, they are, and none the worse for that. Some of them force you to just stare at the screen for a good few seconds, muttering, "Treasure, you complete and utter swines," as platforms and spiky things swirl majestically in three dimensions, daring you to try and pick a way through to that vital red diamond.

"PLATFORMS AND SPIKY THINGS SWIRL MAJESTICALLY IN THREE DIMENSIONS, DARING YOU TO PICK A WAY THROUGH…"

Luckily not every level requires you to cough up the full complement of red diamonds to get to the boss battle. Level eight does, however, and it'll have you swearing mightily as some of the trapdoors are very well hidden and the levels within are, at times, plain evil.

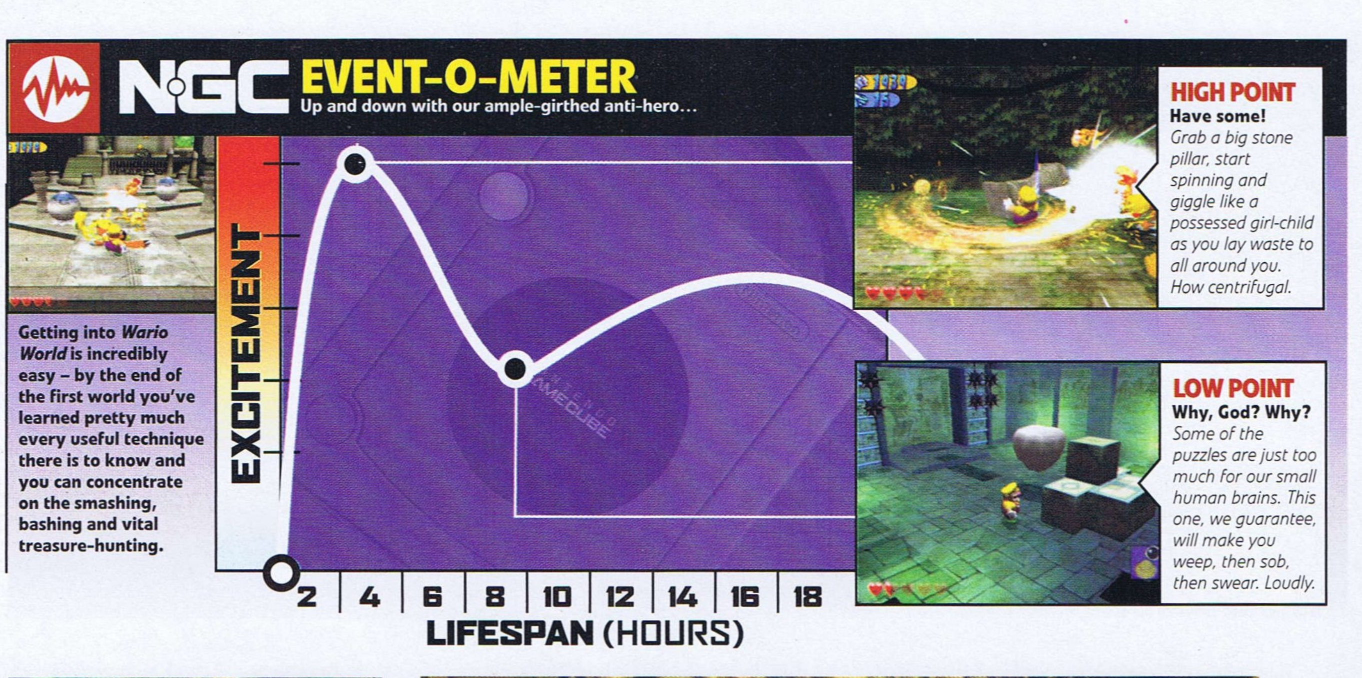
The boss battles themselves are essentially straightforward – a case of working out the weak spot and hammering home the right attack – but they have just the right amount of Treasure lunacy. We're particularly

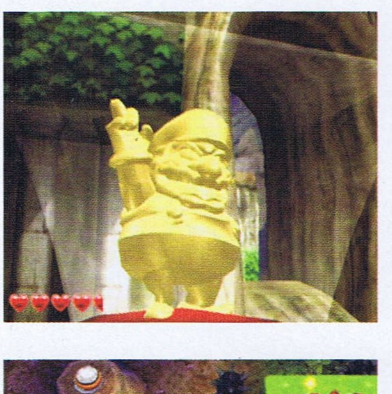


STICK YOU!

Ah, those lovely glue-balls. Now, we'd have a problem clambering over something large, round and sticky in real life, but Wario's not so bothered, and he unsticks himself rather easily. It takes a few seconds to get used to being able to crawl all around them, but once you suss the trick they're a godsend. Until you happen upon the moving ones.

Punchy, pounding portly fun. That's fun with a capital FUN







△ You're down there. You want the red diamond up there. What do you do, eh?



△ Don't you just love the smell of exploding monster in the morning? Especially if it's accompanied by lots of lovely gold coins? Oh yes.

enamoured of the Red-Brief J battle, in which you square up against a seemingly indestructible (and worryingly shiny) pig in a red posing pouch. The trick is to get him to fall into the lava beneath the main platform – easy once you know how, but requiring a fair old bit of thought and dexterity to actually accomplish. Which is how most of the boss battles work.

Mess it up and get a game over, and there's still hope. *Wario World*'s a steadfastly capitalist little game, and continues are available – at a price. In theory you have infinite continues, but they cost you hard-earned coins. Similarly, you won't find health scattered around liberally. Wario is powered by garlic, which he has to buy from vending machines. The more he buys, the higher the price goes. It's like a lesson in supply and demand, or something. Who said economics wasn't fun? (*Everyone – Ed.*)

Oh, and we're not kidding when we say *Wario World*'s a little game. It's none too big and for the most part it's not exactly tough. You'll romp through it in a day or two, though finding everything will keep you going for a while.

Too short? Maybe, but it's the getting there that matters. *Metroid* or *Sunshine* might keep you plugging away for weeks, but Wario's quest is so packed with great little details and wanton silliness that you'll be grinning and cackling all the way through. It's a shame it's all over so quickly, but what *Wario World* lacks in length, it makes up for with gloriously daft and inspired depth. Treasure have done Wario proud – let's hope he'll get more of his own proper games in future.

JIM MCCAULEY

INSERT COIN

Death's not the handicap it used to be. You die, you hand over some of your hard-won coins and you can continue right from where you left off. Useful for some of the more challenging boss battles, that. Kittsy reckons this option's for 'casual' gamers. We'd disagree with him, but we just saw what he did to an innocent bin with a small rotating blade.



- Plenty of inspired cartoon action.
- Utterly polished.
- Totally mad.



- None too tough.
- All over too quickly.
- Rampant capitalism on display.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Mystic Heroes
THQ
NGC/75 71%
Non-stop slasher that'll make your hands ache and your fingers bleed.



8 VISUALS

Beautiful, detailed and madder than a pig in a goblet.



8 SOUNDS

Great tunes and effects, and brilliant little Wario noises.

8 MASTERY

Easy to pick up, but finesse and patience pay off big-time.



6 LIFESPAN

Non-stop loveliness. Until it stops far too early. We want more!

VERDICT

It may not be big or especially clever, but *Wario World*'s a nigh-essential cavalcade of brash, lo-fi fun and extreme silliness. Short but very sweet.



86

"A heady cocktail of stupefyingly dull clichés"

PUMP IT UP
You can only perform your Bullet Time multiple-death dives when your adrenalin meter is full. One dive will drain it temporarily, but it soon fills up again with every kill you subsequently make.

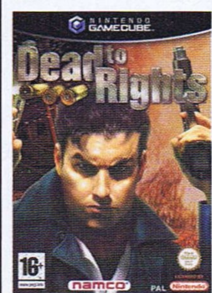
A DOG'S LIFE
The amount of times you can call on your canine pal for assistance is strictly limited. These icons show just how many face-chewings you've got left. Handy, eh?

RECYCLING?
When you start out, most of the weaponry you'll be using will need to be prised from the still-warm fingers of its previous owner. Once you've emptied the clip, it's time to chuck it away and grab another shooter.

BLOOD SIMPLE
With more blood than even the average serial killer would wade through in a lifetime, things can get very messy on screen, especially when you're blasting away with the shotgun.



PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	NAMCO
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



DEAD TO RIGHTS

Gore by the slaughterhouse load and lashings of lovely weaponry. Surely not a game for *Pikmin*-loving nambies like us?



While the fact that violence sells videogames isn't exactly news, it seems to have taken a certain games company a lot longer to come to this conclusion than any of its rivals. For when the kindly Big N was busy ensuring all its titles consisted of sugar, spice and all things extremely nice, the competition were force-feeding their new games on a steady diet of broken glass, wolverine gizzards and ricin pellets.

Violent games may not be big or clever, but they are certainly more likely to shift by the bucketload. And, at long last, that's something that Nintendo seems to have woken up to.

But, while signing up *Resident Evil* to spearhead their new blood-drenched look for the Gamecube was undoubtedly a rock-solid idea, the downside of embracing all this ultraviolence is that sub-standard games can slip past quality control by simply waving the 'mature' flag.

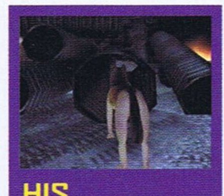
Enter *Dead to Rights*. While Namco's latest foray into the action-adventure shooting gallery is undeniably bloodthirsty, it's also highly unlikely to give even the likes of Geri Halliwell a run for her money in the intelligence stakes.

WAVE OF MUTILATION

The plot is simple; take elements from just about every hard-boiled cop game/film/novel/TV show ever created and roll them into one. And the result? You assume the guise of a gun-toting bobby from 'Da Streets™', out for revenge after the murder of his dad. Throw in an evil upper-class villain and a tart-with-a-heart girlfriend, and the effect is heady cocktail of stupefyingly dull clichés you've endured a thousand times before. Once you're finally thrust into the game itself, however, things pick up somewhat. The first tutorial level leads you by the hand as you get to absorb and digest the finer arts of fisticuffs; gunplay, wall creeping, *Max Payne*-style slow-mo shootouts and, of course, getting your dog to chew off the faces of your enemies.

While most of this action (face-eating aside) adheres pretty much to the standard action-adventure book rules, it's all fairly well executed and is easy enough to pull off.

But, once you get into the main game, any pretensions that have previously been made to explore the semantics of death-dealing, are thrown straight out of the nearest window, as you find yourself simply being attacked by wave after wave of mindless



HIS MASTER'S VOICE

As well as instructing your canine sidekick to dine on the faces of your enemies, you can also play as the dog at certain points. Not only can this not-so-littlest hobo reach areas his master can't, he can also pick up weaponry from enemies he's gnawed on and return them to his chum.

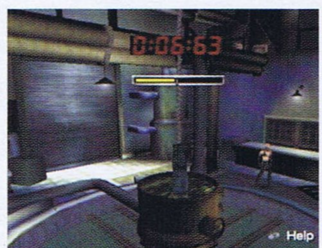
LEARN TO LAP DANCE…
…and other valuable life skills.



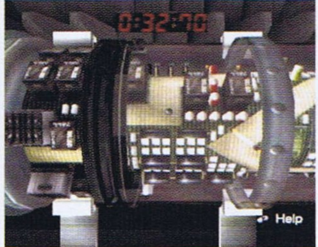
Jiggle your assets on stage to attract the attention of some leering guards. Simply hit the relevant button when it passes through the crosshair. Lovely!



Think wrestling beefy inmates is tough? Think again. All you need to do is tap A to build up your power, then hit B to snap that weakling's arm off at the elbow!



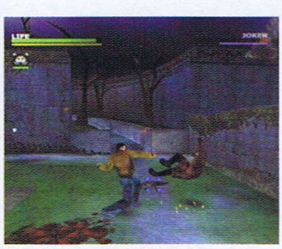
Saving yourself from drowning may be a bridge too far. However, if you do exactly as you did when arm-wrestling you might just make it.



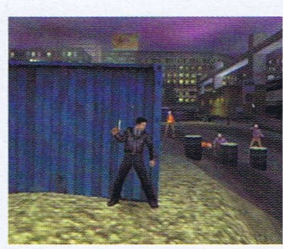
Those bomb disposal experts reckon they've got a tough job, though as far as we can work out, if you guide this icon with the C-stick, it's easy.



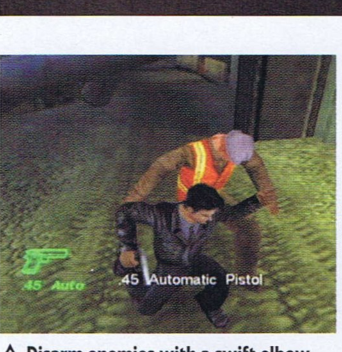
△ **Enemies can be used as human shields until their 'mates' kill them.**



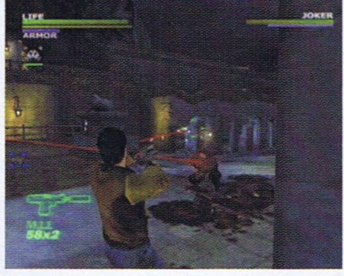
△ **Our rock-hard hero is also pretty handy with his fists.**



△ **Namco have chucked in the regulation bit of sneaking.**



△ **Disarm enemies with a swift elbow right to their juice bags. Nasty!**



△ **Enemies get laser sights on their guns, but using the same ones you don't!**



△ **Multiple hard men can be taken out by chucking a gas canister in their direction, and then shooting it before it lands. Explosive!**

enemies while legging it around flat, featureless environments.

Always on the ball, however, Namco wisely interrupt this tiresome orgy of violence by providing the player with a selection of finger-fangling minigames. These range from the mundane (lock-picking and bomb disposal) to the exotic (getting sweaty with some no-goods in the clink, and jiggling a pole-dancer's poon-tang on stage).

Sadly, despite the somewhat unusual subject matter of most of the minigames, each distraction on offer is completely overused, and even more mind-numbing than the monotonous action it's serving to break up.

PLAYSTATION POWERED

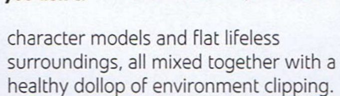
Visually, the game looks identical to the PS2 version it was ported from. As a result, we get to enjoy PSone-quality character models and flat lifeless surroundings, all mixed together with a healthy dollop of environment clipping.

There are some heartening moments though, including a couple of nicely animated set-pieces, such as when our hero chucks away his empty guns and pulls out a fully loaded pair from his jacket – all credit to John Woo there, mind. Sound-wise, *Dead to Rights* fares rather better. The voice acting is really quite convincing (which sort of makes it even more of a shame about the plot) and the meaty gun effects sound authentic enough too.

Despite the novelty value of letting you play as a German Shepherd for certain sections of the game – as you'll have no doubt noticed, it being one of the most original features – *Dead to Rights* is really pretty unconvincing fare. But, if you really, and we mean REALLY, like stupidly violent videogames this may well be worth a punt.

Anyone with a shred of sensibility should stay well clear though, and carry on playing games with infinitely more disturbing possibilities. *Pokémon Ruby* would be a good place to start.

RICH OWEN



"DESPITE LETTING YOU PLAY AS A GERMAN SHEPHERD, DEAD TO RIGHTS IS UNCONVINCING FARE"

BULLET IN THE HEAD

Hit the Y-button and our strongarm hero will go into a Bullet Time-style slow-motion dive lasting for three seconds or so. The right shoulder-button can then be used to cycle through your enemies, taking as many out as you can before hitting the floor and returning to real time.



- Extremely violent.
- Play as a dog.
- Solid voice-acting.
- Nice set-pieces.

–

- Totally brainless.
- Incredibly generic.
- Awful visuals.
- Flat environments.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Enter The Matrix
Atari
NGC/81 73%
Well-designed and faithful to the movies; underneath lurk serious flaws.



4 VISUALS
Like a sub-standard PS2 title. The Cube can do much more.

7 SOUNDS
Some decent voice-acting and solid, meaty effects.

4 MASTERY
Nowhere near licking the envelope, let alone pushing it.

5 LIFESPAN
Loads of difficulty settings to play – if you ever feel the need.

VERDICT

Desperately trying to be hard-boiled, but actually has more in common with action rubbish like *Minority Report*. One for very forgiving fans only.



60



DID YOU KNOW? There's no difference between an Alsatian and a German Shepherd – the former term became popular after the First World War, because of general hostility to anything German.



△ Early tests include making your car go, making it stop, and going round corners.



△ There's always some gurning idiot who has to give the camera a thumbs-up. Tsk.



△ Note the lovely reflection on Damon's helmet. Then find you've hit another barrier. Bum.

F1 CAREER CHALLENGE

It's a man's life on the F1 circuit. Ooh, pass the vol-au-vents, would you? Ta.



What are the benefits of a career as an F1 driver? You get paid rather well. You get to travel the world. You get to go to lots of parties and ('*meet*' – *Ed*) plenty of lovely ladies. You are, to all intents and purposes, *Da Man*.

Down-sides? You end up with a set of unsightly neck-muscles that make your shoulders taper into your ears. And you have to spend your weekends hammering round racetracks far too quickly, squashed into a car designed to fall apart if anyone so much as looks at it funny.

Naturally *F1 Career Challenge* concentrates on the latter part of the deal. Feel free to grow your own grotesque neck muscles if you so wish.

While no F1 game can ever honestly be described as fun, the career business does a pretty good job of keeping you coming back. The deal is that you start off as a rookie driver, and earn your Superlicence. No theory test or three-point turns here – just a bunch of trials to prove that you can handle a selection of F1 disciplines. It's over nice and quickly and then you can get on with the racing.

Which does the job more than adequately. Looks good, shifts well, handles nicely and the fact that you have a virtual career adds a notch of urgency to the proceedings.

Another good point is that you get four authentic seasons to race through, from 1999 to 2002, with all courses, cars and drivers. And, you can jump straight to them in Quick Race mode. Tidy.

A good, deep, sensible racer then. Realistic? You betcha. But a non-stop barrel of laughs? Not exactly.

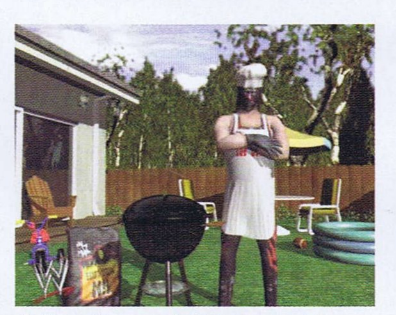


INFO BURST	
FROM	EA
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD	
PAGES	5
WIDESCREEN	NO
GBA LINK	NO
COST	£40

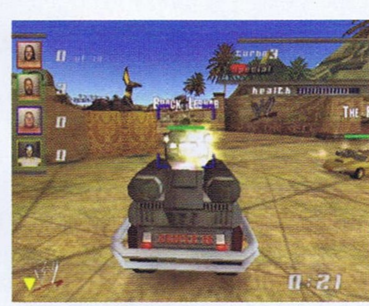
NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **81**



△ A rock feels no pain and an island never cries. Wise words, there. But not The Rock's. No.



△ Sometimes words fail us completely.



△ Vroom. Bang. Vroom. Bang. Yawn.

WWE CRUSH HOUR

Ta. Can we have *Formula One Mud Wrestling* next?

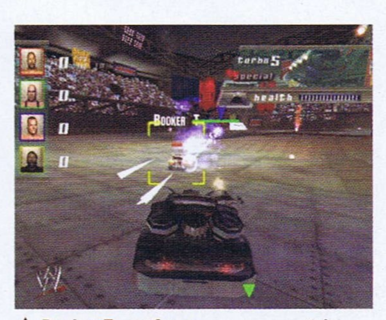


Oh, so large waxed men in skimpy pants isn't quite silly enough for you, is it? Okay, what about large waxed men in skimpy pants driving great big muscle cars with guns and trying to blow each other up? Will that do? Obviously it's not quite dinosaurs in F-15s, but there you go.

On paper, top idea. Fast cars, lots of weapons, big explosions, insane stunts. Lovely stuff. It's the sort of thing that could even entice folk who think that there's something a little lavender-scented about this whole wrestling malarkey.

But no. *Crush Hour* may have all the ingredients, but it's decidedly half-baked. It's as if the developers got all excited about the whole wrestlers, cars and guns bit but never really sat down to think about how it might all fit together.

Critically, despite all the potential for ultimate wreckage, the action barely borders on the interesting. You drive around. You spot someone to shoot. You start shooting at them, they start shooting back, and then you drive round in circles, slowly wearing each other down with your weedy default guns. You can pick up power-ups. They're not much better.



△ Booker T – as far as we can ascertain he's not driving an MG. What a waste!



△ Take a good, long deep look into infinity. Boring, ain't it?

The cars feel leaden and the sound's flat. It's hard to even get the feeling that you're driving something with an internal combustion engine, so clinical and noiseless are they. And as for the commentary… It has. More than. A. Touch. Of the William. Shatners. To it.

It's not a good driving game, nor a good combat game, and gluing the two together don't make it any better.



INFO BURST	
FROM	THQ
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD	
PAGES	2
WIDESCREEN	NO
GBA LINK	NO
COST	£40

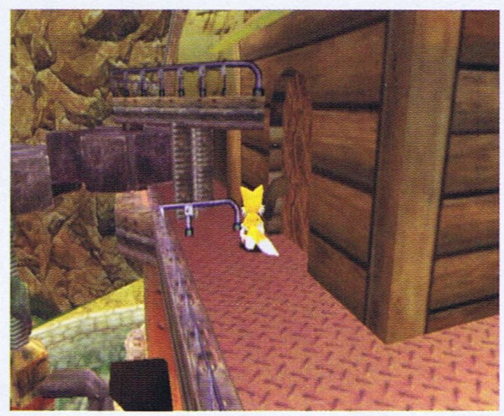
NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **43**



△ The camera's eccentricity is tiresome. Look here. Rings to collect, so obviously the moment you move towards them the view flicks to the other side of the room. Gah.



△ Someone, *please*, release the hounds. Angry ones.



△ Heads or tails? We'll settle for Tails' head, frankly. Ha.



- It's Sonic! Yes.
- Old games for you to unlock.
- Loads of characters

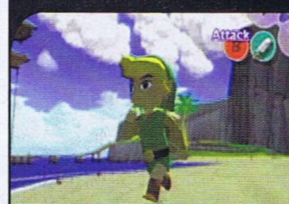


- Bad looks.
- Bad controls.
- Bad structure.
- Bad hedgehog!



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Zelda: Wind Waker
Nintendo
NGC/81 97%
More finesse and joy in the first five minutes than in the whole of this vile game.



3 VISUALS
Old Dreamcast stuff crowbarred into the Cubie. Nasty, eh?

5 SOUNDS
Tiresome jingles, horrible voice-acting. Turn the sound off.

4 MASTERY
Far too glitchy to enable any old skool *Sonic* madskillz. Erf.

5 LIFESPAN
Game Gear stuff to get. We'd rather have one good game.

VERDICT

It wasn't really that great on the Dreamcast. Despite the extras, on the Cube this really is rather appealing. Sorry, *appaling.*





INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	SEGA
DEVELOPER	AMUSEMENT VISION
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



SONIC ADVENTURE DX DIRECTOR'S CUT

Thankfully without the gritty film noir voice-over this time. Or was that a different 'Director's Cut'?

Director's Cut: is it (a) a super-duper improved version of an original? Or (b) some director with a pumped-up ego saying, "Okay, my film was really successful, so here's the version that I *really* wanted to release, but the studio wouldn't let me!" Branding it as the latter conveniently side-steps the fact that the version the studio wouldn't let him release was twice as long, boring as hell and a guaranteed failure.

Sonic Adventure DX: Director's Cut, then. Lord knows how it qualifies as such. For starters, you might expect the Dreamcast visuals to have been given a good old Cubie spit and polish, but you'd be wrong. It looks rubbish. Glitchy as hell with not a trace of lovely Gamecube effects, but instead with an unhealthy portion of pop-up.

> **IT LOOKS RUBBISH. GLITCHY AS HELL WITH NOT A TRACE OF LOVELY GAMECUBE EFFECTS**

Ah. Maybe it's the radically improved gameplay on offer? Er, not a bit of it. The action segments play like, well, like not very good 3D versions of the original Sonic games. And the adventurey bits (including some quite ghastly cut-scenes) ricochet wildly between boring and baffling, perhaps breaking the all-time record for leaving you wondering what in the name of Beelzebub you're supposed to do next.

There's some minor, Tamagotchi-style GBA link-up action, and a load of old Game Gear games to unlock if you can bear to play that long. But really. We shall have to conclude that the answer to our initial question is (b).

JIM MCCAULEY

"You have to ride along standing on the seat"



Δ Few games manage to convey the exhilaration of speeding along on two wheels. This isn't one of them.



Δ What happens if you mess up your sliding.



Δ Plenty of catching up to be done here.



Δ No, no, not the slide button! Try turning the handlebars!



Δ Hit the Turbo button and the screen blurs, thereby proving that you is da man.



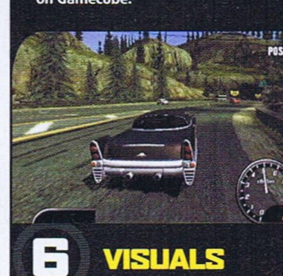
- You can slide under parked lorries. That's a first.
- It's reasonably fast.



- There's little to do other than slide under parked lorries.
- It's no *Burnout 2*.



Burnout 2
Acclaim
NGC/80 90%
A truly spectacular racer, by far the best of its kind on Gamecube.



6 VISUALS

Flat textures and simple architecture. Standard stuff.



4 SOUNDS

An ear-bleeding concoction of Euro-techno cheapness.

5 MASTERY

Keeps the Gamecube ticking over, at least. Nothing special.



6 LIFESPAN

Complete special objectives to earn better bikes. Respect.

VERDICT

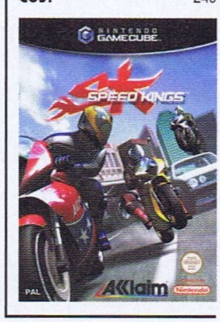
Uninspired racer that wants to be *Burnout* on two wheels, but fails to replicate the things that make *Burnout* so much fun. Disappointing.



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INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	ACCLAIM
DEVELOPER	CLIMAX
RELEASE DATE	NOW
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD PAGES	3
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



SPEED KINGS

Feeling the need? *Burnout* on two wheels sounds like a great prospect, but this one doesn't deliver.



There's no denying that *Burnout 2* is as good as arcade-style racers get right now. So it's to be expected that when somebody's dreaming up a new twist on the old cars-plus-roads-plus-insane-speed scenario, the first thing they'll do is fire up a copy of that 90 per cent-rated smash hit from a couple of months ago, to see how things are supposed to be done.

Speed Kings isn't so much influenced by *Burnout* as it is a blatant attempt to reproduce the same game with bikes instead of cars. Sadly, it doesn't really work. Instead of driving in the wrong lane to build up the turbo meter, *Speed Kings* makes you do stunts that spoil the handling and therefore much of the enjoyment you'd hope to get from blasting around a corner at 200mph.

Rather than awarding bonuses for driving dangerously close to other vehicles, *Speed Kings* asks you to actually touch them. So to get that Turbo meter up to the max, you have to ride along standing on the seat, unable to control the bike very well, and bump into the side of every car you pass. It's a pretty stupid way of doing things, and it isn't a great deal of fun. Also, they call this move a 'ding', which gave us an instant pathological aversion to using it.

Parts of *Speed Kings* are enjoyable for a while, suggesting there's enough material to work with if the developers want to have a crack at a sequel in the future. The way you can powerslide under lorries is, as far as anyone here can recall, a unique feature. But it's heavily scripted, and you'll quickly tire of having to press the slide button because you know a truck is going to pull out in front of you at exactly the same point on every lap.

We're hardly overloaded with good racing games on Gamecube, so it's a shame to see *Speed Kings* adding its name to the long list of the mediocre. You could always treat it as the poor man's *Burnout*, but when the real thing is available for around the same price, there's really very little point.

MARTIN KITTS

> **"SPEED KINGS ISN'T SO MUCH INFLUENCED BY BURNOUT AS IT IS A BLATANT ATTEMPT TO MAKE THE SAME GAME WITH BIKES"**



Δ It's Clarence's van from Robocop.

"Work your way up to a fat palatial Hollywood mansion"

OTHER RIDERS
You race in a field of six bikers, and fortunately they're all as prone to crashing as you are. Or, at least, as we are. There are plenty of chances to catch up.

TRICKS
Build up your turbo meter by doing stunts. They're quite hard to land.



THE MISSUS
Saddled with a lady who looks like she took a severe beating from the ugly stick, it's no wonder our would-be biker wants to upgrade.






- Nice presentation.
- Amusing messages.
- Win lady-friends.
- Drive motorbikes.



- Dull music.
- Unforgiving track boundaries.
- Not too thrilling.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...
ATV Quad Power Racing 2
Acclaim
NGC/77 70%
Much the same sort of thing on four wheels, without the ladies.





6 VISUALS
Nothing special, but at least it's smooth and detailed.



5 SOUNDS
You'll have to be a big fan of 'metal lite' to appreciate it.

5 MASTERY
Excitebike 64 was better, but isn't that always the case?

7 LIFESPAN
Playing to unlock nicer 'girlfriends' has a strange sort of charm.

VERDICT
Nothing incredible as far as the racing goes, but the story does make it a bit more interesting than it would be if it was all simmy and serious.



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INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	ACCLAIM
DEVELOPER	CLIMAX
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD PAGES	3
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



SX SUPERSTAR

Harness the animal magnetism of a two-stroke engine, and find out why the lady loves a biker.

Why do people become semi-pro racing drivers? To attract women, of course. There's nothing a classy lady likes more than a guy who knows how to handle 125cc of cheap Japanese metal, and the kind of girls who hang around dirt bike events, smelling faintly of petrol, are always top of the range.

Which is why this game is all about a lone biker's attempt to make his name in the muddy world of trials racing, in the process upgrading his girlfriend from munting to magnificent.

Winning races earns the cash needed to go somewhere other than Pizza Hut for that all-important first date, and the aim of the game, after ruthlessly ditching a few hatchet-faced mingers, is to have a crack at a lovely lady such as the one pictured above, who looks a bit like an extra from *Resident Evil*.

And underneath this strange storyline is a fairly typical off-road racer that, as you might expect, isn't quite up to the standard of dear old *Excitebike*.

That's not to say it isn't enjoyable, and the presentation – you start out in a grotty bedsit, then work your way up to a fat palatial Hollywood mansion – adds atmosphere to what might otherwise be forgettable stuff.

Nothing in the actual racing offers a significant evolution from the kind of thing we've seen in the past, but it's as good any of its Gamecube peers, and worth digging out from time to time, to see if one more winner's cheque might attract a less lumpen groupie.

Rent it, then write to Nintendo and demand they make *Excitebike* for the Gamecube. The lazy sods.

> **"MAKE YOUR NAME IN THE MUDDY WORLD OF TRIALS RACING, AND UPGRADE YOUR GIRLFRIEND FROM MUNTING TO MAGNIFICENT"**

MARTIN KITTS


mobile
Play games on your phone
GAMER
You already own the most significant games machine on the planet…
…your phone!
65+
NEW GAMES REVIEWED
Tiger Woods 2003
Splinter Cell
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*Well, as free as we can make 'em. You still have to pay a few pence in messages. See issue for details…
In issue 1:
Lara on N-Gage
The best games handsets rated
Is 3G all it's cracked up to be?
And our complete guide to getting games on your phone…
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GAMER
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GAMES
REVIEWED
Splinter Cell
Rayman 3
FIFA 2003
MotoGP
Doom
Star Trek Nemesis
Tiger Woods 2003
Pocket Venus!
Lara's on N-Gage
Inside: the full skinny on Nokia's wonder phone
AND THE AMAZING GAMES IT PLAYS – INCLUDING
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What Phone?
48 of the latest, greatest gamer's handsets reviewed & rated
Win!
SAMSUNG'S GREAT S100 WORTH £300 EACH
(and we've got five!)
GET GAMING!
Your complete guide to the basics starts on page 10

"Judicious bumping will see a police car off"



BIKER BUST-UP

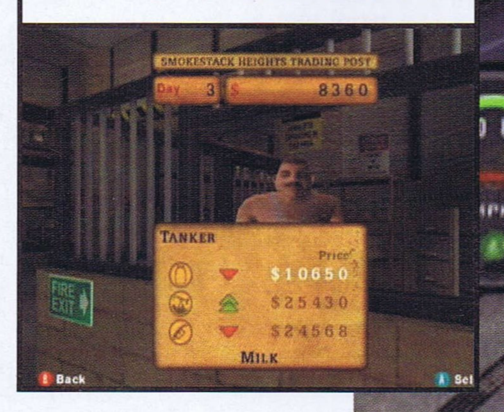
Arouse the wrath of the local Hell's Angels and they'll attempt to climb aboard and nick some of your cargo. A healthy measure of swerving is the way to shake the little beasties off.

DRIVE TIME

You've a wallowing great beast of a vehicle, to be sure. When cornering you must take care, or you risk jack-knifing and getting your rig wedged in a tight spot.

HEAVY LOAD

Your trailer is your livelihood. However, it can be traded in for a different type, such as a tanker for transporting liquids, or a refrigeration unit to cart perishables around.



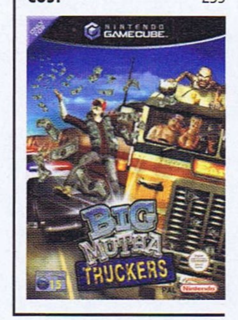
ROAD RAGE

As much as other road-users try to get out of your way, they're still a cause for concern. Although a head-on crash is in your favour, striking a vehicle at a weird angle can garner disastrous results.



INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EMPIRE
DEVELOPER	EUTECHNYX
RELEASE DATE	NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	11
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£35



BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS

"You's a handsome dawg an' no mistakin'! Mus' be on account o' that one big eye of yours".



Hicks: the backbone of working-class America? Or inbred, muck-raking yokels, who don't know crap from clay and boast an unnatural proclivity for 'animal husbandry', if you take our meaning?

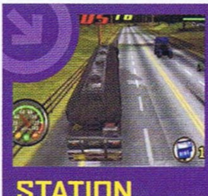
Either way, they're the stars of the show in *Big Mutha Truckers*. If you've ever read Preacher, or seen Deliverance, you'll share our fear of this acutely unpleasant underclass. Thankfully, Eutechnyx's brand of hickery is rather more pleasant. The four Jackson kids, Cletus, Rawkus, Earl and Bobby-Sue are lovable enough. Although the titular (ahem) Big Mutha Jackson (as seen on this page) is a bit of a worry. One ought to always question lineage in these situations.

As one of the four Jacksons, your task is to truck across Hick State County in an effort to prove to Big Mutha that her trucking company is best left in your hands when she pops her scabby clogs. What ensues is a curious kind of RPG racer – involving HGVs. Sounds bonkers, but the concept's actually rather sound, and quite enjoyable to boot.

As the game kicks off, you start with several assets: a truck, a sat-nav and a trailer loaded with your first haul. As the voice of Mutha explains, your task is to find out where you'll get the best price for your wares, and start raking in the cash. It's like some curious mix of *Driver*, *Crazy Taxi* and *Elite*.

Hick State County consists of a series of towns, connected by a criss-crossing network of roads and freeways. Each town boasts a trading post, where goods can be bought and sold. The idea is always to buy low and sell high, thereby maximising your profits. A good way to pick up supply-and-demand tips is to visit the local hostelry – one of which can also be located in each town. So when you hear that salted pork bellies (yum) are in high demand in Capital City, you know it's time to load up on the slippery munt food and get truckin'.

Out on the road is where the action happens. Your 20-tonne steer is, as you might imagine, not the most nimble of beasts. A bad spot of oversteer can cause you to jackknife horrendously, so you have to watch your speed on the corners and hills. Also, traffic tends to get in the way, and when you start nudging people around, the local



STATION KEEPING

The in-game radio is initially a joy, and we're particular fans of K-Rok, which features a number of neat tunes, including Steppenwolf's Born To Be Wild and a Beck ditty. Sadly, the radio just doesn't have the variety of the one in Grand Theft Auto, and soon becomes annoyingly repetitive. A shame.

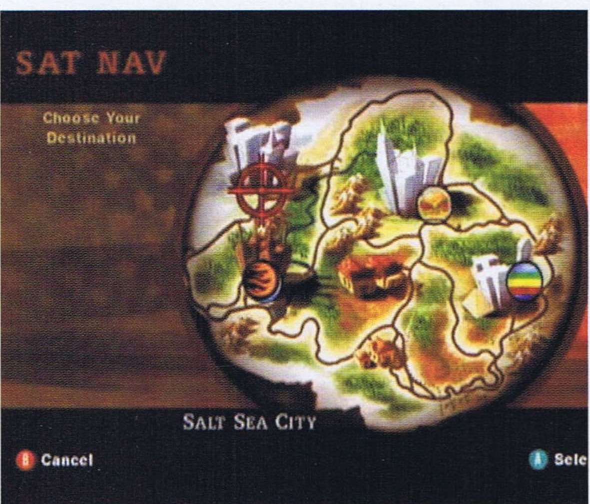
DID YOU KNOW? The French word for *Hick* is *bouseaux*, which means cow turd. Heh.

BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS

Haul ass across America! It's *Elite* with stinking hillbillies…



△ **Handy road signs mark the direction of travel to your destination town. Without 'em, you'd be up poo-creek without a paddle.**



△ **The sat-nav pops up as you leave town, enabling you to plot a route to the next sprawling metropolis. Or sparsely populated hick dustbowl.**

GET YOUR MOTOR RUNNING…



First up you have to nosey round town, and see what's on offer. There are various services available, but hey, let's see to the old iron shirehorse first.



At the garage, you can refuel and repair. There's also a bunch of vehicle upgrades on offer, which can prove invaluable. Handy fuel-saver sir? Lovely.



A trip to the bar may seem relaxing, but it's all work for us truckers. Have a chat with the barmaid, and she'll drop you a hot tip about what's in demand where.

Hey-ho for the open road. Here's Rawkus pulling out behind a trucker who's just challenged us to a race. A win will see you quids in, but losing is costly.

△ **You get some reeeeal nice panning shots of your truck as you pull away from town.**



△ **The scenery is varied. One minute you're in snowy hinterlands… the next, it's like Vegas.**



△ **It's good to check over your shoulder when racing a rival trucker, and barge if he swings close.**

rozzers take a dim view. Fortunately, they're not as tough as you, and a judicious bit of bumping will see a police car off. It's the shotgun-wielding bikers you really have to watch out for – they'll even clamber up on your trailer, and they require a healthy measure of fish-tailing to shake off.

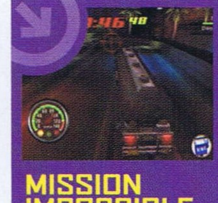
Damage and fuel consumption are two major factors. Before you pull out of town, you'll need enough gas in your tank to get to your next port of call. Plus, you'll need to make sure that any damage incurred in previous bumps and bangs is repaired at the local garage. And here's where the real problems lie: these two costs are, relative to the amount of cash you make from the sale of your goods, astronomical. Also, there are overheads that you have to fork out on constantly, as getting from one town to another is fraught with difficulty.

For example, as you pull out of town, you're often curtailed by rival truckers. When this happens, you can opt to take a wager, and attempt to beat the man in a race to your destination town. These challenges start off easy, but soon become very tricky – what seem to be simple challenges, such as shaking off the aforementioned bikers and cop cars, suddenly become wallet-threatening problems, as taking damage costs you cash to sort out. So much so that often, you'll find yourself passing up the possibility of winning a few bob extra in a town-to-town haulage race, because you know it's hard enough to get to the next town in one piece – without the risk of causing costly damage to your truck in some insane race.

It's annoyingly tricky, and that's the bottom line. Which is a shame, as in all other respects it's a decent game with a lot going for it. The multi-channel in-game radio, while lacking in variety, is a nice touch. And we dig the originality. But a bit more playtesting guys… is it too much to ask? Apparently so.

AL BICKHAM

"SALTED PORK BELLIES ARE IN DEMAND, SO IT'S TIME TO LOAD UP ON THE SLIPPERY MUNT FOOD"



MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

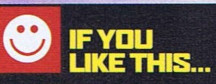
Well, not quite impossible, but bloody hard all the same. There's a second game mode on offer, which charges you to complete a series of missions, usually within a time limit. They're altogether uncompromising, and we soon found ourselves giving up on them in favour of the RPG-style main game.



- Nice engine.
- Neat and original concept.
- Technically sound.

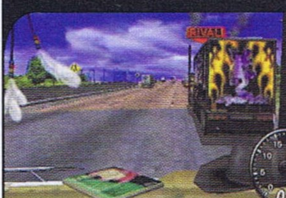


- Really irritating challenges.
- Repetitive radio.
- Too bloody hard.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

18 Wheeler Pro American Trucker
Acclaim
NGC/68 48%
Tedious, less varied, and less humorous version.



8 VISUALS

No complaints at all. Rather nice, both in-game and CG.

7 SOUNDS

GTA-style radio is nice – but ultimately limited.

8 MASTERY

Not a frame-rate issue was espied for the duration.



6 LIFESPAN

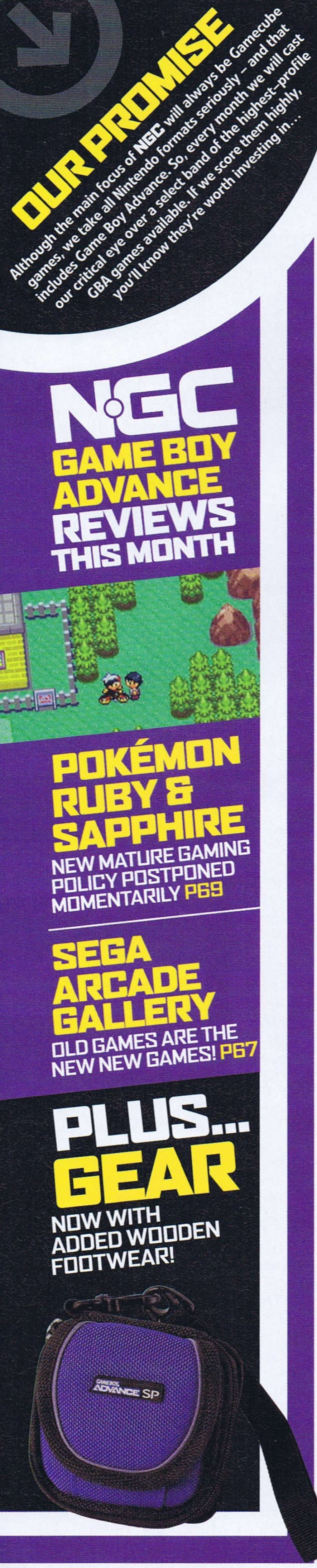
You will tire before you reach the far-off end. It's too hard.

VERDICT

A neat and original idea, which is well executed in most respects. But the sheer difficulty and lack of playtesting do detract.



71





△ The special attacks that some weapons can unleash are great.



△ A lovely treat for those who finished the first game. Ooooh.



△ Pound is just one of the new Psynergies.



△ The opening sequence is genuinely amusing. No, it seriously is.



△ A Rod Hull joke at this point would be gratuitous...



△ Ah, another jolly wibbly effect as you use your magic. Joy.



△ The locations are standard RPG fare – forests, deserts, blah.



△ Scampering along ropes like a monkey is also new to the sequel.

GOLDEN SUN THE LOST AGE

NGC STAR GAME

You've got to be Djinn it to win it!

Ahahahahahahaha hahahahahaha...! Cough. Cough.



Golden Sun was one of the biggest games on the GBA, so a sequel was inevitable. *The Lost Age* picks up the story, starting with the huge explosion as the Venus lighthouse was lit. The blast was enough to literally move continents – you could never accuse this game of thinking too small.

What you get here is a very pure, turn-based RPG. There are bosses, there is magic, there are plenty of menus and you'll level up a lot. You wouldn't think an involved, plot-heavy RPG would find a place on a handheld, but it's so compulsively playable that it works despite that.

The new features include new Psynergies like Pound (knocking pillars and other objects into the ground), more mind-bending logic puzzles, new Djinn to fight and find, and new weapons with fantastic-looking special attacks. There are plenty of side-quests to busy yourself with, weapons to forge and all the things a really good RPG needs.

One of the nicest touches, of course, is the ability to enter the password you got at the end of *Golden Sun*, and transfer your party stats, items, Djinn and so on to the new game. You'll also get new events, and earn new items. But you don't need a password to be able to enjoy the game.

It's hard to find fault with *The Lost Age* and, if you like RPGs and have a GBA, you probably already own it. If you don't, why not try it? You might just like it...



△ Ah, wandering along the world map – makes a RPG fan feel all warm and fluffy.

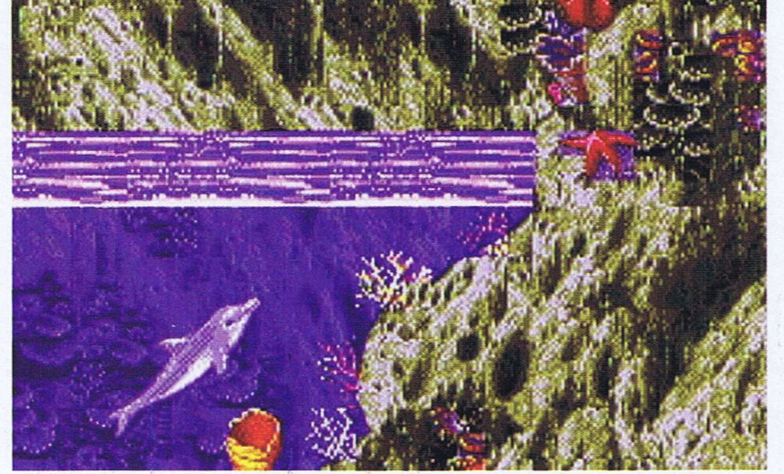
"ONE OF THE NICEST TOUCHES IS THE ABILITY TO ENTER THE PASSWORD FROM GOLDEN SUN"

INFO BURST

FROM	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

91



△ Ecco the chuffing dolphin. Just begging for some tuna farmers to come by and net him, before stuffing him into cans of John West's finest and hoping no-one will notice. Hmmm.



△ Only Geraint knows what's going on here, because he's a tedious retro-geek.



△ A dragon vomits blood at the feet of the warrior princess. Typical bloody lizard.

SEGA SMASH PACK



It might all be Sega, but it's not quite as smashing as they'd have you believe…

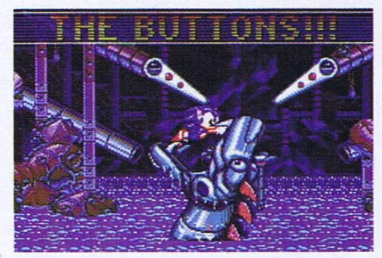


Let's face it. Any compilation where *Sonic Spinball* ranks as the second-best game doesn't bode well. At all. It wasn't up to much when it first came round on the Mega Drive, it most certainly didn't cut it when it came to *Sonic Mega Collection* – and its third appearance on GBA doesn't exactly have us jumping for joy.

Golden Axe has fared even less well. It's essentially a basic hack-and-slash affair, and it's both dull and frustrating in equal measures. There is some chance that it might have been entertaining back when no one really knew any better, but by today's standards its subtle blend of hammering the attack button and repeating attack patterns is, well, rubbish.

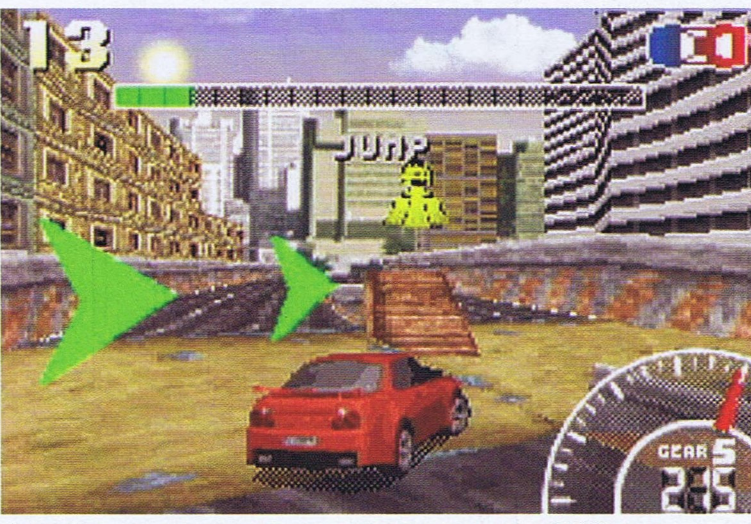
Ecco the Dolphin, on the other hand, still plays like a breath of fresh air. It was remarkable in its day, and subtle depth to the controls, innovative puzzles and an epic quest still make it extremely compelling. Moreover, it was brutally challenging and consistently rewarding. It hasn't changed one bit.

Whether or not it alone warrants the price tag is another thing entirely. Especially when you consider the titles that could have been included in the compilation. The Dreamcast's *Smash Pack* had *Streets of Rage* and the original *Sonic* game. And, frankly, any of these would have been far more worthwhile than the other games on this cartridge. Furthermore, their omission reeks of a golden opportunity, criminally wasted.

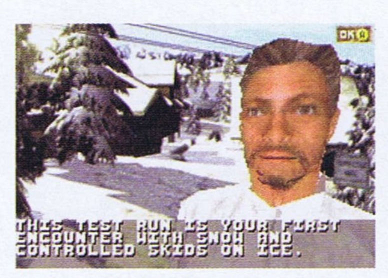


△ A giant robot sock-puppet tries to eat our hero alive. We hope he succeeds.

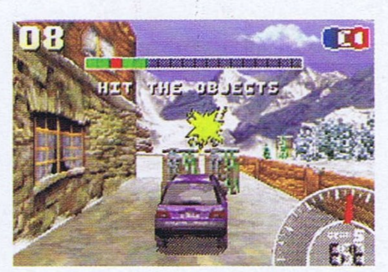




△ It really is very close to the PS2 version of the game. It's even as initially slow.



△ Geary looks like this after a few hours of not shaving. Thank the Lord he's left us.



△ Hit the boxes, as signified by the vomit-green splat symbol. Magnificent stuff.

STUNTMAN

Become a man of miniature, handheld stunts! Become… the STUNTMAN!



With so many 3D racers on GBA trying to impress visually (and failing terribly we might add), it's with some surprise that we received this – a 3D vehicular obstacle course game that's very entertaining.

The premise is simple. Set out before you is a course littered with obstacles. Some you need to smash through, others – like falling rocks and double decker buses – you need to avoid. On top of this you're required to do handbrake turns at 180 or 90 degrees, as well as use jumps before landing in the specified zone.

It's a little like a high-speed Simon Says. Only in a car. The GBA's tiny speaker barks out spoken commands as you drive along, and it's up to you to execute the manoeuvre by the time you reach the yellow marker. For every success you get a little green mark. Miss too many, or drive too slowly, and you'll fail. But, if you fill the green bar with green marks the scene will be complete, and your reward is a replay of your successful stunt driving.

All in all, it's a cracking little game. The only downside is that once you've learned the tracks, there's little incentive to return.



△ Ah, a snow level. If we didn't have snow, what would developers do, eh? Eh? Eh?



△ A red car speeds down the road, redly. And red ones, as we know, go faster. Um.





Δ Mickey, dressed as a cleaner, complete with Luigi's Poltergust 3000. Maybe.



Δ Ah yes, the haunted mansion level. All the classics are here. Even the jungle level.



Δ Can anyone remember what Mickey's nemesis is called? Anyone? He's not quite as iconic as Bowser or Ganon, is he? Just a big dog with five o'clock shadow. Or is he a bull? Tch, etc.

DISNEY'S MAGICAL QUEST 2

It's another Disney platformer! Everybody party! (Dies quietly.)



Oh look, another inoffensive platforming game starring uncle Walt's quietly sinister anthropomorphic ani-men. Despite its relative merits, *Disney's Magical Quest 2* is a game that's very hard to care about. What's one more cutesy-pie platformer to the GBA? Who'll buy this over *Yoshi's Island* or, ooh, a game with Mario in it? But then, perhaps Mickey has thrown the yoke of being less popular than the plumber from his neck and suddenly become a gaming superstar. Although somehow we doubt it.

But, cynicism aside, this is a surprisingly accomplished affair. It's not brilliant, don't get us wrong, but it's far better than it has any right to be, and brings back shiny memories of the venerably classic *Castle of Illusion* on the Mega Drive. The animation is pant-swingingly endearing, and the gimmick – a number of different costumes for our hero, each of which bestows a specific ability – works well. You also get to choose to play as either Minnie or Mickey, which is largely cosmetic in effect, but should appeal to, well, someone.



Δ You can play as either Mickey or Minnie. Your prayers are answered! Hallelujah!

It's a very easy game, so don't go expecting any *Mario*-style hardcore platforming action. So, once again, this Disney title is fine for the undiscerning younger gamer in your life, but for the rest of us, is best left alone.



INFO BURST

FROM	CAPCOM
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **68**



Δ Look at the amazing power of the GBA, despoiled by careless developer zombies.



Δ A back alley! And a vampire! Good lord, they could at least have made an effort.



Δ What oh what are we to do now the TV show has finished? Ah well, at least Spike will be back in next year's series of Angel, even though he's apparently dead. (*Geek – Ed.*)

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER
WRATH OF THE DARKHUL KING

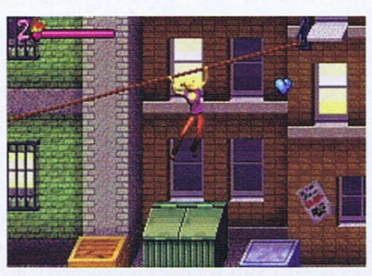
A lesson in how to throw a rubbish game together from little bits of cack...



What is the matter with these people? This really is truly, *truly* awful. We weren't expecting much from this but, by the nose of Moses, this absolutely stinks. It's one of the best examples of bash-it-out and sell-it-quick that we've seen in a long time.

A completely and utterly brainless adventure platform adventure, you take control of vampire huntress Buffy, and walk about basic environments themed on woods, hospitals and schools, solving basic puzzles.

Along the way you bump into moronic NPCs that waddle from left to right like demented, caged zoo animals. Whereupon you stop to kick, or punch, them until they either fall over, disintegrate or you slip into a coma through the sheer banality of it all.



Δ Look! It's just like the telly! If your telly is broken and dead, that is. Pfft.

Admittedly, there are plenty of weapons to choose from, but to be honest you just won't care. Because after a while you'll realise that they make not even the tiniest difference to the gameplay.

The overall production values of the game are so damn cheap that it's laughable. And even the running animation on Buffy herself is dreadful. The levels play like they've been pieced together by a five-year-old, and constant corner-cutting – like having player-friendly NPCs disappear on the spot – all point towards a title that the developers couldn't have cared less about.

There's absolutely *nothing* in here that has any semblance of originality.

Make no mistake, we wouldn't even contemplate playing this if it was handed to us by Sarah Michelle-Gellar herself, with the cart wedged between her beautifully toned butt-cheeks. No siree. And anyone who feels obliged to buy this because of the strength of the licence alone needs a good kick in the teeth.



INFO BURST

FROM	THQ
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **21**

△ Not really a lot of people to send you off, is it? Perhaps you're not particularly popular...



△ It's 3D but it's not 3D. The crazy world of videogames, eh? It's like some kind of magic.



△ *After Burner* doesn't really work without a joystick, which is a shame. Ah well.



△ At least two members of the **NGC** team have still got the Spectrum version of this.



△ Space! Harrier! Space! Harrier! *SPACE HARRIER*! That name never made sense.



△ *Hang-On*! Again, not really the best name. *Go Go Super Bikes!* would work, mind.



△ How quaint these games look nowadays. Remember when they were cutting-edge?

SEGA ARCADE GALLERY

Four classics for the price of one?

Sega's compilation of their best loved games on one tiny slab of plastic...



he second of Sega's trips down memory lane this issue is an outing for their arcade classics. But, as with the *Smash Pack*, those who want this the most will probably have already played all the games.

Out Run, *After Burner*, *Hang-On* and *Space Harrier* have all been converted admirably, but time and downsizing have been somewhat cruel to the other titles featured on the cartridge.

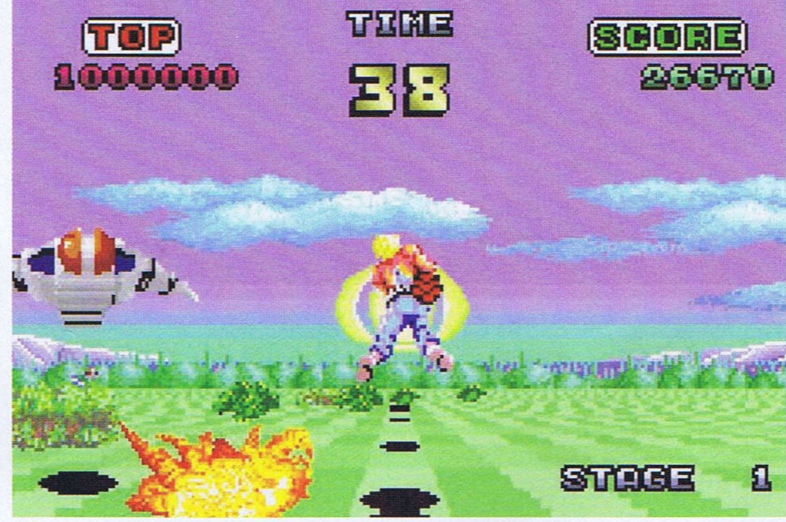
Take out the thrill of sitting in the bone-shattering *After Burner* arcade cabinet and you're left with what amounts to a very basic, and rather tedious shoot-'em-up. Likewise, *Hang-On* becomes far less enjoyable as you can't keep the bike at a consistent angle to let you cruise round the various bends.

"FOR AN ADDICTIVE NO-FRILLS RACER IT STILL HAS THE POWER TO BRING A SMILE TO YOUR FACE"

So it's down to *Space Harrier* and *Out Run* to come up with the goods. And they do. Although *Space Harrier* is much harder to play on the small screen, with enough practice you can reclaim the joy of whittling down top scores. Not too shabby at all.

It's *Out Run*, though, that makes the collection worth it. The music is spot-on, the speed exhilarating and the challenge is still there. Granted, you don't have the steering wheel, but it doesn't matter. Visually, the game may not be up to much, but for a fast, slick and addictive arcade no-frills racer, this still has the power to bring a beaming smile to your face.

Of all the Arcade collections on GBA so far, this is the best. Half the games aren't really up to much these days, but they still provide the quick-fix gaming that the GBA is designed for. And, with four games to get stuck into, it's hard to argue.



△ *Space Harrier*! Good, clean fun, although we always thought his arms would get tired.



△ *Out Run*. Geraint loves it, but then he's a tedious retro-geek and always will be.





△ Looks like the people who converted this have turned the brightness all the way up.



△ It doesn't have the same depth of detail as the SNES original.

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

Nit-picking and faeces-flinging are sadly absent in this GBA port.



△ Rolling out the barrel in true Kong style. Ahh, this brings back the memories…



△ It's the treetop village level from the original *Turok*. Break out the fusion cannon.

The first question that springs to our soft and yielding human-brains is this: why did they bother? Those of you with effective earth-memories may recall that *Donkey Kong Country* has appeared in mobile form before, as the snappily-titled *Donkey Kong Country* on the Game Boy Color. It was, and is, EXACTLY THE SAME FRICKIN' GAME. What's going on with Nintendo?

If you were of a mean-spirited nature you might snort at Ninty's current tactic of recycling old SNES games, bemoaning it as cynical and 'easy', which is perhaps modestly truthful (although we welcome the return of *Yoshi's Island*, et al). But this really *is* taking the biscuit. It's not only an old SNES game, it's an old GBC game too. But, grumbling aside, *Donkey Kong Country* remains a cracking little platformer, if one that's not quite so incredible as everyone remembers it being on the ol' Super Nintendo.

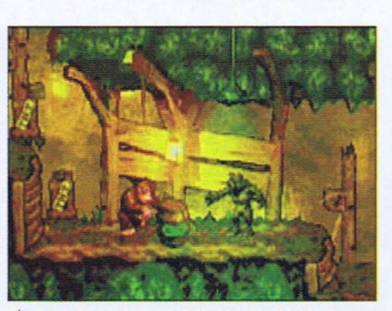
Visually, it's still a corker. Rare's digitised characters mesh well with the colourful backgrounds, and amble along with pleasingly top-notch animation. It's streets ahead of the GBC version, graphically, but not quite as polished as the SNES version. And a decade's-worth of familiarity with the game has dulled the lustre of a title that was once hailed as an eye-gouging classic.

> **"A DECADE OF FAMILIARITY HAS DULLED THE LUSTRE OF WHAT WAS ONCE AN EYE-GOUGING CLASSIC"**

Nevertheless, this is still hugely accomplished stuff, and a genuine joy to play (even if it gets hideously difficult at times). The tag-team set-up, where you can swap between Kongs, is still good fun – especially now that two players can link GBAs and play co-operatively – and plentiful gameplay quirks make this a sufficiently individual experience. Riding animals, bombing along in minecarts, even the old 'stop-go' switches – there's plenty of meat to the simian bone here.

But you've probably played this before, and the GBA version doesn't offer much new stuff (the new multiplayer modes are a bit duff, frankly). Nonetheless, if familiarity hasn't bred contempt, consider this a worthy purchase.

△ Remember the classic music for this underwater stage? Very soothing.



△ Smash the barrel, DK. Maybe Diddy is inside it – then you can wring his neck!

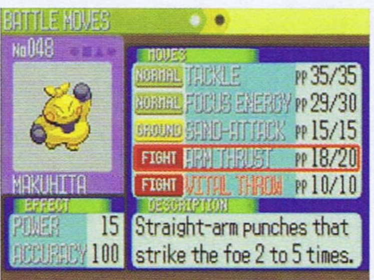


INFO BURST

FROM	RARE/NINTY
PLAYERS	1-2
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON-CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **80**

△ You get this bike fairly early on in the adventure. There's a choice of two types – a stunt bike that can pull wheelies, like this one, or a racing bike. You can swap types at the cycle shop.



△ Naturally, there's loads more info than in the previous games. Screen after screen of it.



△ Use the Navigator to view details of the trainers you've already defeated.

△ All your stuff is stored in a backpack that must weigh at least half a ton.



△ Here's a satellite view of Hoenn, the island you're travelling around.



△ You can combine your records with up to three friends. Sociable!

POKÉMON RUBY & SAPPHIRE

Make 'mon a double. Pikachu returns from the wilderness years...


Seems like more than four years since Pikachu first invaded this country, doesn't it? And, who knows, maybe the kids who played *Pokémon* the first time around are too busy slaughtering hookers and selling drugs in *GTA Vice City* to consider spending another 50-plus hours catching exotic virtual pets.

But *Pokémon* remains a captivatingly innocent pastime that's as wholesome and sociable as any game could possibly be.

It's still all about collecting creatures to train for battle, with the objective of becoming the best trainer in the land.

Fights are deceptively complex turn-based affairs, and the many new features built into the GBA version, such as extra abilities or tag-team contests, do much to expand the scope of the game.

As ever, the only way to catch every type of Pokémon is to trade with somebody who owns the other version. Four-player battles are supported too, and the forthcoming e-Reader peripheral can be used to scan cards containing bonus data, then send it to somebody else's copy of the game. Four players can also join forces to mix up delicious nourishing berry concoctions to share among their virtual menageries.

There's a huge amount of stuff to play around with in the link-up modes, which is why *Pokémon* can become so compulsive for those whose friends also own the game.

The game structure is identical to previous *Pokémon* games, but then it isn't aimed at the people who got hooked on *Red* and *Blue*. This time Nintendo is after their younger brothers and sisters, with a game that's twice as big, and a whole lot more fun than the original titles ever were.

In *Pokémon* terms, this is more of a levelling up than a full-on evolution for the series. Even though it's unlikely to have the same impact as the original did, it's arguably the best RPG available for GBA. Anyone with a highly developed sense of fun will get a huge kick from this. And don't forget to save some cash for the inevitable merchandising frenzy too.



△ What kind of a name is Poochyena? The ideas department must have had the day off.





FIVE FOR A PRIZE!

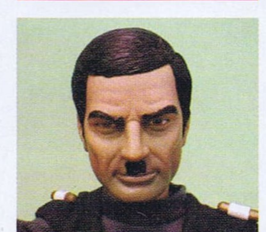
Of course, we could easily sit around all day making Top 5 lists, like crazed list-addict John Cusack. In fact, we often do. But, as ever, we want YOU to do the work now. You've seen the format over the past few months, so send in your own Top 5 lists, accompanied by **25 words** on each entry…

NGC ESSENTIAL

THE BEST CUBE GAMES MONEY CAN BUY…

TOP FIVE OFFICE MASCOTS

Five sinister idols hold sway over the **NGC** office; a star chamber of graven images whose malevolent gaze directs and oversees all magazine activity. They would like to meet you…



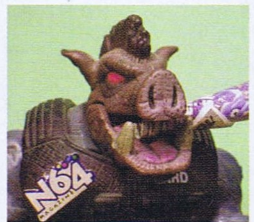
CAPTAIN BLACK



RAY LIOTTA



MR PRESLEY



PAUL'S PIGMAN



SPIDER-MAN





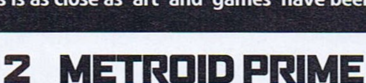


1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA THE WIND WAKER — 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/79

The babbling nonsense of the internet whingers faded to a stunned silence when "Nu Celda" finally hit the shelves. It's an interactive experience that's as exquisitely fashioned as a Disney feature film, and doesn't lose any of the gameplay for it. Some interminable sailing sections spoil it a bit, and it's pretty short, but this is as close as 'art' and 'games' have been yet.

NGC STAR GAME



2 METROID PRIME — 97



NINTENDO ■ NGC/79

A polished, addictive stunningly immersive adventure-cum-shooter-cum-platformer that will make you cry when it's over. Pushes the envelope in every field. Classic.

NGC STAR GAME

3 SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE — 96



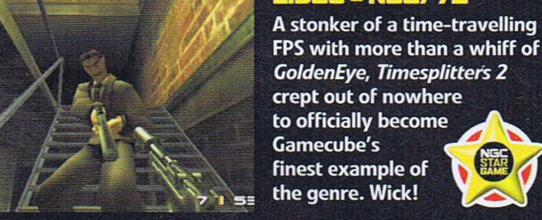
NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

Mazza's cleaning up oily muck on a tropical island put there by an evil villain. With all the intuitiveness, polished visuals, and sense of pure fun of *Mario 64*, this pushes all the right buttons.

NGC STAR GAME



4 TIMESPLITTERS 2 — 92

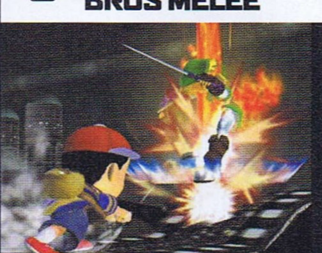


EIDOS ■ NGC/72

A stonker of a time-travelling FPS with more than a whiff of *GoldenEye*, *Timesplitters 2* crept out of nowhere to officially become Gamecube's finest example of the genre. Wick!

NGC STAR GAME

5 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE — 91



NINTENDO ■ NGC/68

Eye-singeing multiplayer, ingenious moves, cameos from about every Nintendo character ever, and some of the sweetest looks yet squeezed from the Cube.

NGC STAR GAME



6 WAVE RACE BLUE STORM — 91



NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

Slight frame-rate problems in PAL, but *Blue Storm* is still a fabulous racer, replete with *the* most incredible water effects ever. Fast, dynamic, accessible and sublime to control.

NGC STAR GAME

7 HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN — 91



EIDOS ■ NGC/82

Tighten the fibre-wire and leave your morals at the door as Mr 47 brings his potent elimination simulation, freshly polished-up, to the Cube. This is stealthy, free-form gaming at its finest.

NGC STAR GAME

8 BURNOUT 2 — 90



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80

B2 takes the best bits of the first game – bum-clenching speed and bone-crunching collisions – and welds them onto more modes than you can eat. A brilliant series refinement.

NGC STAR GAME

9 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE


ATARI ■ NGC/78

Essentially *Gauntlet* with lots of numbers and menu screens, online *PSO* becomes an epic tale of crate-smashing, internet companionship, and fevered item collection. Blork!

NGC STAR GAME

10 SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS

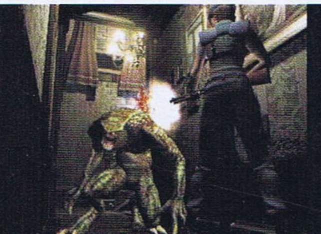



ATARI ■ NGC/81

Vast boat-based RPG ported from the Dreamcast. "It'll take away a chunk of your life and you won't want it back", says a man versed in such things. It's very good, apparently.

NGC STAR GAME

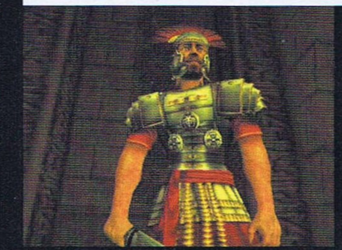
11 RESIDENT EVIL

CAPCOM ■ NGC/72

The classic zombie-horror fear-fest recreated to take advantage of the Cube's superior electrical witchcraft. Stunning, mesmerising visuals, unrivalled atmosphere and a brilliant storyline. Controls are still crap, though.

12 ETERNAL DARKNESS 89



NINTENDO ■ NGC/74

A rollicking Lovecraftian yarn of ancient evils, *Eternal Darkness* replaces slick zombie-slaying action with a wonderfully creepy story told through a cast of 12 playable characters, and a truly innovative magic system.

13 CONFLICT DESERT STORM




SCI ■ NGC/80

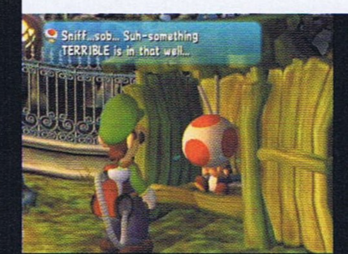
If there's no war on and you're getting withdrawal symptoms, why not try this exemplary soldier sim? Tense and teeth-gritting, with a great tactical co-op mode. Brain-based fun for those nuclear winter evenings.

14 SPLINTER CELL


UBI SOFT ■ NGC/81

Starring Sam Fisher, a man with three green glowing eyeballs and powerful thigh muscles. Clanciverse stealth-fest with a gritty 'realistic' feel and the opportunity to operate various Clancy-approved hi-tech gizmos.

15 LUIGI'S MANSION

NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

With Mazza incarcerated in a haunted house by you-know-who, brother Luigi ushered in the year of the Cube in with this fantastically playable combination of *Super Mario World* and Ghostbusters. It's a little bit short, but still ace.

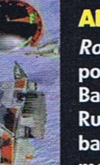
16 SUPER MONKEY BALL 88



ATARI ■ NGC/67

Ingenious update of *Marble Madness*. Chuck in a monkey *Mario Kart*, pool, golf and 'springy boxing' and you've got one of the weirdest, most wonderful GC games out there. Great stuff.

17 STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER 87



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68

Rogue Leader bolts eye-popping renditions of the Battle of Hoth and the Trench Run onto silky-smooth space battles to produce the most memorable – and certainly the best-looking – Star Wars game yet. Well done, Lucas.

18 SSX TRICKY 87



EA ■ NGC/69

Has PS2 written all over it in big, fat neon letters, but still works wonders with your Cube. Fast, spectacular courses, shortcuts and secrets and some mid-piste scrappage make this conversion brilliant, *brilliant* entertainment.

19 LOST KINGDOMS II 87



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/70

CCG-ing comes to the Cube in this accomplished RPG, in which you collect cards and battle mythical monsters in pretty fantasy landscapes. Might not sound like much, but *Lost Kingdoms* is far more than the sum of its parts.

20 DEF JAM VENDETTA 87

MAJESCO ■ NCG/82

Wrestling thumpfest featuring all your favourite hip-hop artistes from 'the block'. Bone-crunching moves, booty with all that, and some 'sick' beats. But where are Flava Flav and Easy-E? Chekkit!

TOP TEN GBA GAMES



1 ADVANCE WARS
A cute-looking turn-based strategy game it may be, but underneath is a frighteningly addictive, super-challenging masterpiece that'll hook anyone experiencing it. Frankly, one of the best games we've played.

2 METROID FUSION
Everything that has ever made *Metroid* great can be found here. A sprawling environment littered with baddies and an imposing difficulty level. It has a great link-up feature with *Prime* too.

3 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
This slightly tweaked version of the SNES classic boasts a massive game world and some of the tightest level designs ever. Stone-cold classic.

4 YOSHI'S ISLAND
Stunning level design, fiendish puzzles and secrets all topped off with some beautiful pastel-shaded visuals. Another essential 2D platformer for GBA.

5 SUPER MARIO KART ADVANCE
Much like the superb SNES original: burn around multi-coloured tracks dishing out justice with weapons.

6 STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3
An incredible conversion of one of the best fighters ever. Massive single-player and a brilliant two-player experience.

7 BROKEN SWORD
Perfect for those long journeys. A gripping storyline, sharp, sarcastic dialogue, some sweet visuals and a more efficient control system.

8 CASTLEVANIA HARMONY OF DISSONANCE
More accessible than its previous GBA outing, this is classic *'Vania*. Imaginative bosses, a steep challenge and very atmospheric.

9 BALLISTIC ECKS VS SEVER 2
Hands-down the best FPS on GBA. Technically brilliant, and both easier on the eye and more engaging than *Doom*.

10 GRADIUS ADVANCE
The best shooter on GBA, and it's doubtful many will ever get close. Classic *Gradius* gameplay, with innovative levels and fantastic bosses.

NGC DIRECTORY

Your at-a-glance guide to everything the Cube has to offer…

HOW IT ALL WORKS

A little screenshot of the game in question…

Title, score, publisher and where to find the review.

ARMY MEN: NAVY MEN — 10



3DO ■ NGC/99.99999999
Tight jumpers, thrusting engines, and hard-bodied men giving and receiving orders, as they sweat together in a long metal tube.

A brief outline of what to expect and whether you should consider it…



18 WHEELER PRO AMERICAN TRUCKER — 48



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/68
Drive your truck from A to B and avoid 'smokey'. A bit like *Out Run* with 'rigs', but the arcade version with the sit-in cabinet was better.

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP — 30



EA ■ NGC/69
About as much fun as being told your parents have been crushed to death in a horrific car crash. And then contracting Weil's Disease.

ACE GOLF — 74



EIDOS ■ NGC/74
A highly enjoyable, relaxing sticksie-ball game that treads a pleasant middle-ground between fun and serious.

AGGRESSIVE INLINE — 81



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72
Gentle *Tony Hawk's* alterno-clone – this time you're skating around massive arenas, 'busting' tricks on a pair of them there 'roller-boots'.

ATV QUAD POWER RACING 2 — 70



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/77
Wave Race on land with bouncy farming utility vehicles. Competent enough, but there's plenty of superior racing fare out there.

BALDUR'S GATE DARK ALLIANCE — 80



VIVENDI ■ NGC/ 81
Dungeon-slashing adventurising with less numbers and beards and a special two-player flavour added to the mix. Actually quite good.

BARBARIAN — 70



VIRGIN ■ NGC/72
A button-mashing fantasy battler complete with fully-smashable arenas. Fun for a while – but it's not as good as *Smash Bros.*

BATMAN: DARK TOMORROW — 15



KEMCO ■ NGC/ 81
Bats stars in Gamecube's most arse-clenchingly bad title to date. And it's not even funny-bad. Clunky, dull, gameplay-free superheroics.

BATMAN VENGEANCE — 70



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/67
Cel-shaded platforming cartoon bat-action. One of the first Cube games that came out – but it's looking pretty ropey already.

BEACH SPIKERS — 79



ATARI ■ NGC/72
Volleyball, as played on sand. Brilliantly addictive with four players, but the single-player's longevity lets the side down.

BIG AIR FREESTYLE — 28



ATARI ■ NGC/75
Yet another awful off-road bike title. The kind of game that makes you want to cry the second you've started playing. Don't bother.

BLOOD OMEN 2 LEGACY OF KAIN — 72



EIDOS ■ NGC/77
Gamecube's other undead hack-fest. After 1,000 years of slumber, evil vampire lord Kain is awake and hungry. Breakfast, anyone?

BLOOD RAYNE — 65



VIVENDI ■ NGC/79
Vampire fun. Dismember Nazis, fire a staggering array of period weaponry, and battle an *evil priest* driving an *armoured pulpit*. Yup.

BLOODY ROAR: PRIMAL FURY — 74



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68
Competent-enough morphing-into-animals fighting shenanigans, but *Capcom vs SNK* and *Mortal Kombat* have since surpassed it.

BMX XXX — 48



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/76
Childish, boring BMX game featuring pneumatically-enhanced strippers showing you their nipples. Get a girlfriend instead.

BOMBERMAN GENERATIONS — 70



VIVENDI ■ NGC/76
Yet another update of the venerable arson franchise. Single-player is enjoyable if a little tedious; four-player is as addictive as it ever was.

TOP FIVE TRAMP DRINKS

TENNENTS SUPER STRENGTH
ABV: 9.0%
The lager of choice for the urban gentleman of leisure, with a robust, complex palate reminiscent of orange squash and rubbing alcohol. About the drunkest you can get for £1.30.

FROSTY JACK'S
ABV: 17-ish%
Just when you thought genetically engineered cider couldn't get any worse than White Lightning, along comes a beverage named after a malevolent pagan demon. Description of 'Frosty' somewhat detracts from the fact that its principle consumer has no access to refrigeration.

METHYLATED SPIRITS
ABV: 100%
You know you've got a problem when you start buying your booze at Homebase. Still, the purple dye they put into it to stop people drinking the stuff lends a refreshing tartness and some powerful hallucinogenic qualities to boot.

LIGHTER FLUID
ABV: dangerous
The Frosty Jack's to Methylated Spirits' Dom Perignon, if you like. Protracted use causes slow, agonising death.

PAINT
ABV: unknown
Not a drink as such, more an intoxicating meal and wall covering in one. Marigold and British Racing Green are popular flavours, but old-fashioned egg-based gouache has the greatest nutritional value.

BURNOUT — 86



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
With bone-splintering, spectacular crashes and twitchy, inch-perfect handling, *Burnout* is a dream of a game, even if it's over a bit quickly.

CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO — 79



CAPCOM ■ NGC/72
A great game, but purist retro freaks will want to fork out for one of those enormous, clunky arcade sticks to get the most from it…

CASTLEWEEN — 16



WANADOO ■ NGC/ 81
Unfairly difficult dismal platforming tedium with some kind of cartoony black magic schtick going on. *Crash Bandicoot's* idjut brother.

CEL DAMAGE — 60



EA ■ NGC/66
Silly cel-shaded car-combat game in the vein of violent Warner Bros cartoons. Far too manic and confusing for its own good.

CRASH BANDICOOT THE WRATH OF CORTEX — 40



VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
One of the worst ports we've seen – and of a game that was a stinking load of crap to begin with, too! Avoid like death himself.

CRAZY TAXI — 70



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
Ancient title that's so old it's now been included as one of the minigames in *GTAIII*. Creaky graphics, but still good fun.

DAKAR 2 — 79



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80
Driving around in a vast expanse of dirt, all on your own, for days on end? *Dakar 2* somehow manages to make this into pretty good fun.

DARK SUMMIT — 51



THQ ■ NGC/69
Think *SSX Tricky* but with all the speed, style and entertainment removed with near-surgical precision. A waste of time.

DAVE MIRRA 2 FREESTYLE BMX — 75

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
Pornography-free moto-cross game that's actually good. Slick, smooth with big arenas – but this will only appeal to the BMX hardcore.

DEFENDER — 50



MIDWAY ■ NGC/79
Rather pointless 3D update that makes one of the hardest-core arcade classics really easy, and by extension, depressingly dull.

DIE HARD VENDETTA 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/74
Wear a vest and shoot holes in people who look like terrorists, so America can enjoy one more night of guiltless slumber. Sweary.

DISNEY'S MAGICAL MIRROR 26

DISNEY ■ NGC/73
A cruel form of torture as The Mouse patronises his way through this hideous 'adventure'. Almost Beckettian in its non-eventfulness.

DISNEY SPORTS BASKETBALL 55

KONAMI ■ NGC/82
Strip away the franchised exterior and it's another pointlessly simple Sports title. Soon to follow: *Disney Sports Russian Roulette*.

DISNEY SPORTS FOOTBALL 69

KONAMI ■ NGC/76
Oddly enough, this isn't anywhere near as bad as you may think. It's an amusing, simple footie game, ideal for younger gamers.

DISNEY SPORTS SKATEBOARDING 64

KONAMI ■ NGC/80
The Mouse and his irritating friends have a crack at busting tricks on half-pipes. Walt must be spinning in his cryogenic storage-pod by now.

DONALD DUCK GOIN' QUACKERS 32

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/68
A bit like *Crash Bandicoot*, except with The Duck in charge, wearing a sailor's costume and going bthackakackthh. Also total rubbish.

DOSHIN THE GIANT 62

NINTENDO ■ NGC/74
Quirky title that puts you in charge of a giant schizophrenic yellow man who must help/hinder indigenous islanders. A little short-lived.

DR MUTO 70

MIDWAY ■ NGC/79
Amusing mad-doctor platforming game where you have to mutate into different animals to solve puzzles. Science is fun after all!

DRIVEN 60

BAM ■ NGC/68
Very basic, very short game of the appaling film about driving fast in a large circle. Filling up bargain bins worldwide as we speak.

EGGO MANIA 49

KEMCO ■ NGC/72
Rubbish take on *Tetris* that, mystifyingly, involves ovulations. Wouldn't look out of place on an Amiga. Pointless in every way.

TOP FIVE CELLULOID SOCIOPATHS


FRANK BOOTH
Blue Velvet
"I'll send you a love letter! Straight from my heart, f blork! You know what a love letter is? It's a bullet from a f blork! g gun, blork! r! You receive a love letter from me, you're f blork! forever! You understand, f blork! I'll send you straight to hell, f blork!"
ACCESSORIES Gas mask; severed ear; Roy Orbison album

DON LOGAN
Sexy Beast
"blork! off, you're revolting. Look at your suntan, it's leather, you're like a leather man, your skin. We could make a f blork! g suitcase out of you. Like a crocodile, fat crocodile, fat b blork! d."
ACCESSORIES Baldness; terrifying stare; Tourette's syndrome

DR LECTER
Red Dragon
"Oh, I have time Will. Oodles!"
ACCESSORIES Greek philosophy; cookery book; internal organs

TOM RIPLEY
Ripley's Game
"Hold my watch, because if it breaks I'll kill everyone on this train"
ACCESSORIES Watch; calculating intellect; art collection

PATRICK BATEMAN
American Psycho
"Take the lyrics to Land of Confusion. In this song Phil Collins addresses the problems of abusive political authority. In Too Deep is the most moving pop song of the 1980s, about monogamy and commitment. The song is really extremely uplifting."
ACCESSORIES Kitchen knife; embossed business cards; reservation at Dorsia

ENTER THE MATRIX 73

ATARI ■ NGC/ 81
Take the red pill and find out how vaguely disappointing this movie tie-in is. After all the hype we were expecting something really special.

ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS 2002 37

KONAMI ■ NGC/67
Winter sports game combining tiresome button-mashing antics with equally dull timing and precision exercises. Dull.

EVOLUTION SKATEBOARDING 78

KONAMI ■ NGC/79
Snazzy-looking *Hawk's* clone, but then, as they said in the old Galaxy ads, why have cotton when you can have silk? Or something like that.

EVOLUTION SNOWBOARDING 23

KONAMI ■ NGC/79
Fight bad guys while sliding down a mountain on a tray. Somehow even worse than *Dark Summit*. Games like these should be made illegal.

EXTREME G 3 85

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
A bit of an underrated gem, *XG 3* offers pulse-shattering speed, huge, tracks, some ingenious weaponry and eye-spanking visuals.

F1 2002 67

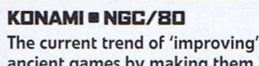
EA ■ NGC/71
Rock-hard racing simulator your dad will enjoy. Also features humourless German driving robot M Schumacher version 1.0.

FIFA 2003 83

EA ■ NGC/75
EA finally remember how good football games are made. Actually a bit better than *ISS 2*. Need we say it's also a vast improvement?

FIREBLADE 59

MIDWAY ■ NGC/77
Nondescript brain-free helicopter game that will appeal to military memorabilia-collecting psychos and likers of bad 80s Vietnam 'movies'.

FROGGER BEYOND 59

KONAMI ■ NGC/80
The current trend of 'improving' ancient games by making them 3D taken to its most extreme conclusion. Functional gaming.





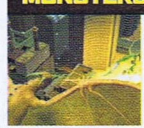
Every Gamecube game ever… rated!

GAUNTLET: DARK LEGACY — 25



MIDWAY ■ NGC/68
We'd be far more comfortable with this travesty if we'd had it inserted rectally. An insult to the legacy of a venerable arcade classic.

GODZILLA: DESTROY ALL MONSTERS MELEE — 68



ATARI ■ NGC/74
Lots of good stompy, building-smashing monster fun in multiplayer mode, but otherwise a little weak. Get *Smash Bros* instead.

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS — 78



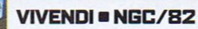
EA ■ NGC/75
Attractive and competent enough adaptation of Potter's film – but rather easy with it. Only die-hard speccy wizard fans need apply.

HOT WHEELS: VELOCITY X — 45



THQ ■ NGC/75
Basic racing/car-combat game based on plastic toys. Perhaps even coded in basic. Strictly for the very, very young. Or very stupid.

HULK — 65



VIVENDI ■ NGC/82
Get angry, turn green, and, yes, SMASH your way through levels of puny soldiers. Also stealth with the rather more boring Bruce Banner.

IKARUGA — 85



ATARI ■ NGC/ 80
Classically old-style shooter – originally designed for robots, now available for human consumption. *Ikaruga* is very, very, very hard.

ISS 2 — 83



KONAMI ■ NGC/68
A winning formula mystifyingly tarnished with unnecessary 'improvements'. Still good – but also a step backwards.

ISS 3 — 78



KONAMI ■ NGC/82
The once-invincible football series sinks ever lower with a misguided new 'close-up' mode. And still no sign of *Winning Eleven 6* for Europe.

JAMES BOND 007 AGENT UNDER FIRE — 70



EA ■ NGC/70
Slog around workaday gameplay in off-the-peg shooter upholstery, shooting baddies with ping-pong balls. Strangely unsatisfying.

JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE — 72



EA ■ NGC/75
The best Bond game on GC so far – and done with some flair – but tasty visuals can't hide an FPS that's a little lacking overall.

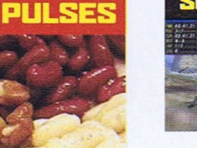
JEDI KNIGHT II — 67



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
A seriously disappointing PC conversion of an overrated shooter. Huge game, but quite tedious. Does little to improve on *Dark Forces*.



KITTSY'S TOP FIVE PULSES



BAKED BEANS
"A fine foodstuff. These beans contain most of the essential dietary elements, enveloped in a tasty tomato sauce that can be further enhanced via the addition of a tsp of curry powder."

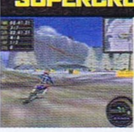
LENTILS
"The vast potential of the humble lentil has yet to be realised. From lentil soup to lentil pies, lentil gratin, roast leg of lentil, and even lentil cake, there are virtually limitless ways to enjoy your lentil. Shame you have to soak them for an entire day before using them."

KIDNEY BEANS
"Since I do not consume meat, Dr Lecter's recipes are sadly unavailable to me, so I have to resort to the quiche eater's equivalent; kidney and fava beans with a fine Chianti. Liver beans would be better. Fththththththsssssss."

CHICKPEAS
"Not only the principle constituent of houmous. In Saudi Arabia, you can buy punnets of them flavoured with cumin and onions from street vendors. Much nicer than grey hotdog meat."

A STILL PULSE ON A COLD, DEAD BODY
"Hey, even Hitler was a vegetarian."

JEREMY MCGRATH SUPERCROSS WORLD — 20



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/69
Like a horrible nightmare about doing cross-country wearing nothing but steel-wool pants and barbed-wire flip-flops.

JIMMY NEUTRON BOY GENIUS — 18



THQ ■ NGC/78
Tedious, sorry, devoid-of-inspiration 'puzzle' game ('Y'know – for kids!') that actually manages to out-borify *Universal Studios*.

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER — 75



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/73
Same old nutritious trick-based extreme-sports diet as usual, but this time in tubes made of water. Actually quite good fun, for a while.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2003 — 79



EA ■ NGC/75
If the more arcadey nature of *Rocky* doesn't sit all that well with you, then it's worth giving this face-smashing simulator a go.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING — 47



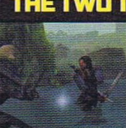
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/69
The gimmick of bringing back old-skool 'rasslers' is nowhere near enough to make this any good. A shambolic licensing cash-cow.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING II — 50



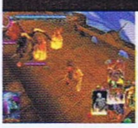
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/76
Practically the same game as above. Yet another travesty of a wrestling game, made only marginally better thanks to the likes of Big Daddy.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS — 68



EA ■ ISSUE 78
Repetitive hacking game with faint RPG overtones. Guide your man through endless levels making goblin prosciutto and orc sausages.

LOST KINGDOMS — 86



ACTIVISION ■ 1 ■ NGC/70
Collect, er, cards, and battle mythical monsters with them in pretty fantasy landscapes. The sequel does is a bit better, though.

MARIO PARTY 4 — 68

NINTENDO ■ NGC/75
Disappointing stuff. It's not bad if you're in the mood for boardgame party fun, but it's done very little to improve on the originals.

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2 — 70



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Another decent-enough extreme sports sim. A bit slicker than *Dave Mirra*, but with smaller, tighter arenas. Does the job.

MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE 74

EA ■ NGC/75
Saving Private Ryan-style FPS set during World War II. Looks rather ropey in places, but it's atmospheric and highly enjoyable.

MEN IN BLACK II ALIEN ESCAPE 45

ATARI ■ NGC/78
Rubbish off-the-peg third-person shooting game of the rubbish off-the-peg movie sequel. Did we say it was rubbish?

MICRO MACHINES 57

ATARI ■ NGC/78
Like the recipe for bread or wine gums, *Micro Machines* doesn't change much, and this iteration is certainly no exception.

MINORITY REPORT 39

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/77
Astonishingly brutal third-rate ass-whupping game that takes place on the sets of a Spielberg movie. Utterly, relentlessly violent.

MORTAL KOMBAT DEADLY ALLIANCE 80

MIDWAY ■ NGC/77
The best *Kombat* yet! The spine-ripping, blood-feasting yarn finally gets the update it deserves on Gamecube. Finish him!

MX SUPERFLY 63

THQ ■ NGC/73
An MX game that handles like you're driving space bikes on the surface of the moon. The best of a very bad bunch, though.

MYSTIC HEROES 71

THQ ■ NGC/75
Simplistic, repetitive 3D *Gauntlet*-style slash-'em-up that's somehow strangely entertaining and charming. Well, Geraint thinks so.

NBA 2K3 85

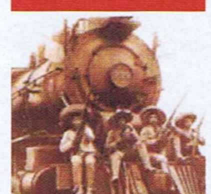
ATARI ■ NGC/79
A titan of a basketball game that puts all others to shame. Great gameplay complements a brilliantly engrossing career mode.

NBA COURTSIDE 2002 79

NINTENDO ■ NGC/68
The second-best basketball sim available, but it's still lacking somewhat. Strictly for hardcore fans of the Ball of B.

NBA LIVE 2003 70

EA ■ NGC/75
The predictable common-or-garden yearly EA update. Solid gameplay; lots and lots of lovely numbers; not much different from last year.

TOP FIVE REVOLUTIONS


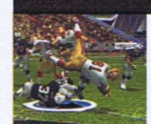
FRENCH
1789-1795
Marie Antoinette's necklaces worth more than the entire national debt; "Let them eat cake" (the cake was in fact brioche); Sans Culottes (translation: no trousers); Robespierre being shot in the jaw; The Cult of the Supreme Being; poor people not really any better off after all that. Bit hazy on this one.

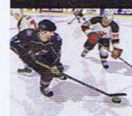
RUSSIAN
1917
Turtle-neck wearing coffee-house types seize power; futile attempt at industrialising a previously feudal agrarian society; Ra-Ra-Rasputin, lover of the Russian Queen; Omar Sharif finally finding Lara. Oh, that was Dr Zhivago. Still, good movie.

AMERICAN
1776-1783
Washington fighting the British at the Battle of Lexington; They had some kind of Tea Party in Boston to celebrate; Er… Should have paid more attention in GCSE history. D-, must try harder.

INDUSTRIAL
18th century
The introduction of power-driven machine tools to manufacturing giving rise to the urban proletariat and the decline of the peasantry. Or something like that.

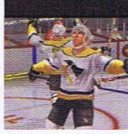
MEXICAN
1910
Massacre at the Cananea mine in 1906 eventually led to the overthrowing of moustachioed dictator General Porfirio Diaz. Nice!

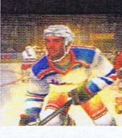
NEED FOR SPEED 2 HOT PURSUIT 69

EA ■ NGC/74
Ironically slow, sluggish, speed-free racer. Yet another lazy port that's ruined what was originally a pretty entertaining franchise.

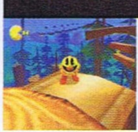
NFL 2K3 86

ATARI ■ NGC/79
A meaty gridiron sim that's a real threat to the *Madden* franchise. Bags of management roughage don't detract from the gameplay.

NHL 2003 64

EA ■ NGC/75
A more realistic approach to ice hockey which, while decent enough, isn't particularly fast or – more importantly – fun.

NHL 2K3 72

ATARI ■ NGC/80
Massively complicated ice hockey title, with stodgy and unwieldy gameplay. In a similar vein to *NFL 2K3*, but doesn't quite pull it off.

NHL HITZ 20-02 79

MIDWAY ■ NGC/67
Exaggerated ice hockey title in a similar vein to Midway's *Red Card*, where the sticks aren't just there for hitting the puck.

NHL HITZ 20-03 65

MIDWAY ■ NGC/74
Another year, another dose of frantic ice action. Still better than EA's take on the game – not much cop on the original, mind.

PAC-MAN WORLD 2 70

EA ■ NGC/78
The Pac is back for some hilarious retro-themed platforming fun. Shamelessly pilfers absolutely everything from *Mario 64*.

PIKMIN 86

NINTENDO ■ NGC/80
Created using textures from Shigsy's own garden. A wonderful real-time strategy with multi-coloured vegetable men.

PRO RALLY 2002 58
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/74
An okay game completely and ruthlessly dragged down by its thoroughly awful, frustrating handling. Leave well alone.

PRO TENNIS WTA TOUR 48
KONAMI ■ NGC/74
The only tennis game on Gamecube so far, but with rubbish non-analogue controls and some distinctly whiffy visuals.

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 74

SCI ■ NGC/78
Surprisingly solid, does nearly all the things a rallying game should. Should do the job until *Colin McCrae* finally sees the light of day.

RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC 84

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/78
The limbless floppy-haired French Freak™ has the last laugh with a Rayman game that, insists our correspondent, is actually good.

RED CARD 20-03 78

MIDWAY ■ NGC/71
Violent football game where you mince opponents with stud and fist until the meat shows. Should be called *Roy Keane's Red Card 20-03*.

REIGN OF FIRE 59

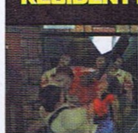
BAM ■ NGC/76
A poor game of an equally poor film, even if you do get to burn stuff. Some nice ideas ruined by dodgy physics and controls.

RED FACTION II 66

THQ ■ NGC/82
Shoot decadent capitalist scum in the face, and maybe blow some holes in walls too, in this distinctly average brown fighting game.

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO 85

CAPCOM ■ NGC/ 78
Resi Zero ditches the old solo formula for a two-character system. Great set-pieces, looks lovely… it's more *Resi*, basically.

RESIDENT EVIL 2 62

CAPCOM ■ NGC/81
Experience the shambling, undead terror of original PSone graphics! Revisit Leon, Claire and their blocky unwashed friends for just… £30?!

RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS 65

CAPCOM ■ NGC/ 81
Braaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiinnnn nnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnssssssssssssssssssssssss! Etcetera.

ROBOTECH: BATTLECRY 77

TDK ■ NGC/77
Stompy king-size robots go to war in the game of the crazy Japanese cartoon franchise. Not bad at all, as far as stompy robot games go.

ROCKY 78

RAGE ■ NGC/74
A solid fighter where you guide Rockys one through five to punching greatness. Great two-player, loads of unlockable extras.



DIRECTORY

Every Gamecube game ever… rated!

SCOOBY DOO NIGHT OF 100 FRIGHTS! — 36

THQ ■ NGC/74
Platforming non-action that will hold your interest no longer than half an hour, or until you need to go to the toilet; whichever comes first.

THE SCORPION KING — 30



VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
Bad. Very bad. Guide a poor approximation of The Rock around and hit bad guys over and over until they bleed from the eyeholes.

SEGA SOCCER SLAM — 67



ATARI ■ NGC/74
Another cartoonish footie game with a major interest in violence and OTT moves. Cracking in multiplayer – poor on your own.

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE — 52

EA ■ NGC/68
A really quite bad *Crazy Taxi* rip-off, with various Simpsons characters bolted on, spewing repetitive 'funny' one-liners.

THE SIMS — 81

EA ■ NGC/79
Highly addictive people simulating comes to the Cube. A great sense of humour and endless potential for interior decoration and/or mischief.

SMUGGLER'S RUN WARZONES — 78

ROCKSTAR ■ NGC/73
Impressive, hee-uge landscapes and fast-paced 'racing' in buggies and jeeps are let down by repetitive gameplay and awful robot music.

SPY HUNTER — 55



MIDWAY ■ NGC/68
Appaling frame-rate, nasty course design and dull linear racing make this one to avoid. Yet another pointless, crappy remake.

SPYRO: ENTER THE DRAGONFLY — 40



VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
Much like *Crash Bandicoot*, this is another shoddy port of a game that was never really much fun in the first place.

STAR WARS BOUNTY HUNTER — 68



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/77
The panting, pot-bellied, totally rubbish space-assassin gets the *Tomb Raider* treatment in this distinctly average game.

STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS — 71



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Enjoyable *Battlezone*-style tank blaster set around Episode II – not quite as good as *Rogue Leader*, but still fun all the same.

STARFOX ADVENTURES — 72



NINTENDO ■ NGC/74
Disappointing adventure that's way too easy and linear. Not awful, but should have been far better. Hardly a fitting send-off for Rare, either.

THE SUM OF ALL FEARS — 25



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/76
One of the most technically inept games we've ever played. Clancy says bury the copies in the Arizona desert before anyone notices.

SONIC ADVENTURE 2 BATTLE — 70

ATARI ■ NGC/67
Sega's annoying mascot on Gamecube, now with an extra dimension added for some reason. Does anyone care anymore?

TOP FIVE HETROSEXUAL LIFEMATES

JAY AND SILENT BOB
Never apart, but never 'together' (ahem), though even if they were, Jay would still be seeing the ladies on the side.

MIKE AND TIM FROM SPACED
Holding hands on the way to paintball, they're best of friends. The definitive Heterosexual Lifemates. If only they'd created the phrase they'd be in first place.

MATT STONE AND TREY PARKER
Created Cannibal! The Musical together (and of course South Park), they went to the academy awards together in matching dresses, and look set for life… together.

BEN AFFLECK AND MATT DAMON
They write scripts together, star in films together, and are only upstaged by those other Heterosexual Lifemates that are occasionally in the same cast (J & SB).

NGC AND WORLDY BLOKE
Well they were once… until some girl (Enjiki) tore them apart. But for a time they looked inseparable, hence the place at number five… for old time's sake (sniff).

Thomas Thompson@The Internet wins a random GBA game if he (sigh)… tells us WHERE HE LIVES.

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION — 70



ATARI ■ NGC/79
If you have a hopeless retro arcade problem, you could do worse: seven Sonic games on one disc, accurate down to even the loading times!

SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE — 72



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/69
Dodgy control and camera issues are the only problems with this enjoyable platform adventure. Voiced by the original cast, too.

SUMMONER A GODDESS REBORN — 68



THQ ■ NGC/79
As much levelling-up and numbers floating out of people's heads that you can eat. Crappy visuals, but a sprawling, engrossing adventure.

SUPER BUBBLE POP — 65



JALECO ■ NGC/78
Kind of *Tetris*-y flavoured *Bust-a-Move* for the Sunny Delight generation, with chemically-induced visuals and music. Wick.

SUPERMAN: SHADOW OF APOKOLIPS — 60



ATARI ■ NGC/ 81
Supes redeems himself somewhat with this serviceable, stylised and, most importantly, maze-free effort based on the animated cartoons.

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2 — 82



ATARI ■ NGC/78
The apes are back with levels even harder of core, and a mental new story mode involving love, betrayal and heinous banana-theft.

TARZAN FREERIDE — 59



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/67
Disney. Platformer. Do we really need to say any more? Workaday, jungle-based gameplay with the Seventh Earl of Greystoke.

TAZ WANTED — 52



ATARI ■ NGC/72
Some of the worst level design we've ever seen in this middling, frustrating cel-shaded *Mario*-wannabe platformer.

TETRIS WORLDS — 38



THQ ■ NGC/73
THQ manage to ruin one of the Best Games Ever by trying to make it 'better'. Again. Will anyone stop these people before it's too late?

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003 — 82



EA ■ NGC/75
The world most efficient golf robot gets his own game. Actually really good, in a surprisingly arcadey way. Nice graphics, too.

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON — 66



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/79
Clancy has yet another go at squad-based tactical ops, and this time things run a little bit more smoothly. Entertaining stuff.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 — 87



ACTIVISION NGC/67
Mental grinds and stunts backed up by a mountain of hidden extras and vast skate parks – if you haven't tried *Hawk's*, now's the time.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4 — 85



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
No time limits (hurrah!) and some great RPG elements and minigames complement the larger areas in *TH4* – a well-tweaked fourquel.

TOP ANGLER — 35



XICAT ■ NGC/81
Generic fishing game, predictably involving bass, that doesn't even get the basics of its limited genre right. Somewhat tiresome.

TOP GUN: COMBAT ZONES — 71



VIRGIN ■ NGC/72
Tail-riding, wingman-being movie-based flyboy antics. GC's only flight 'sim' – pretty challenging, but we recommend you try it first.

TUROK EVOLUTION — 71



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/73
Relatively disappointing dino-hunting FPS sequel. Not as bad as *Turok 3* on the N64, but serious niggles let the series down badly.

TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER — 60



EA ■ NGC/76
As average a platformer as you'll find, with an Antipodean twist. It's a solid example of the genre but nothing more or less.

UFC THROWDOWN — 51



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/73
Highly amusing freestyle thump-fest, where you lead your oily, grunting man to victory in some vague Greek-style athletic contest.

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS — 24



KEMCO ■ NGC/67
Anyone who makes a game that has you picking up rubbish deserves to be shot in the kneecaps, stuffed into a suitcase and hurled into the sea.

V-RALLY 3 — 68

ATARI ■ NGC/82
Speedy rallying game that wouldn't be so much of a terrible drag if they could have concentrated on the basics first. Like, er, the steering.

PAUL'S SENSE TALK

GBA PLAYER
"Utter madness. It cunningly combines the non-portability of a home console with the shoddy graphics of a handheld! What's that all about?"

BODILY EXPULSIONS
"Sneezing is really quite aggressive, isn't it?"

POTATO SNACKS
A packet of crisps that boasts it is enhanced "with sugar and sweetener" just isn't right. In fact, it's plainly wrong."

WORK PRACTICES
"Just go for the free drinks. They're free!"

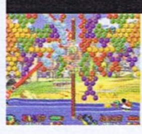
FLATULENCE
"Why won't anyone pull my finger? It's not dangerous – I'm only going to twist one off!"

VIRTUA STRIKER 3 V2002 — 55



ATARI ■ NGC/69
Nice to look at, horrible to play. Rubbish AI and unwieldy controls make for a crap game of footie. Did we say it looked nice?

WORMS BLAST — 63

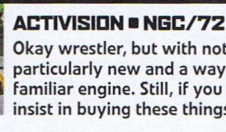


UBI SOFT ■ NGC/74
Annelids go to war (again). Kinda like *Bust-a-Move* in a puzzly-action kind of way, except this isn't anywhere near as good.

WRECKLESS THE YAKUZA MISSIONS — 51

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Drive around like a lunatic and smash up cars and everything else that gets in your way. Sub-*Burnout* road-accident nonsense.

WWE WRESTLEMANIA X8 — 70



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72
Okay wrestler, but with nothing particularly new and a way-too-familiar engine. Still, if you must insist in buying these things…

X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION — 55



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Duller than dishwater. Fighting-by-numbers stuff that offers very little of interest. Total waste of a pretty cool licence, too.

X-MEN 2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE — 64



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/82
Is he a man? Is he a wolf? Is he a genetically engineered awol super-soldier with hillbilly hair? Stodgy fighting with the clawed X-Man.

ZOOCUBE — 50



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/71
Insane puzzle game involving a rotating mouth that sucks animal genitals and goes 'moo', 'oink', 'roar', 'quack' and sometimes 'wah!'



GEAR

The stuff we get sent each month that just doesn't quite fit anywhere else in the mag. And a pair of huge wooden shoes.

WHAT IS A BEST BUY?

Well, you know when you're standing in your local game shop, dazzled by the array of gleaming peripherals and thumbing your pennies and notes with your clammy, nervous fingers? It's an indication of which item you should reach for before clutching it to your belly and presenting it to the store's cashier.

NGC BEST BUY

GBA SP FM RADIO

FROM INTEC ● £8 ● WWW.INTECLINKEUROPE.COM

Don't like the music in your GBA games? Plug this gizmo into the top of your SP and you can replace all those irritating sound effects and tunes with the life-affirming sounds of real radio. The possibilities are endless. In the morning your *Mario Kart* times could be enhanced by the soothing tones of Sara Cox. In the afternoon, you could finally rid yourself of Koji Kondo's awful *Zelda* tunes, and listen to The Archers while you search for the Triforce. Comes complete with headphones, ready to rock.



WORSE THAN...

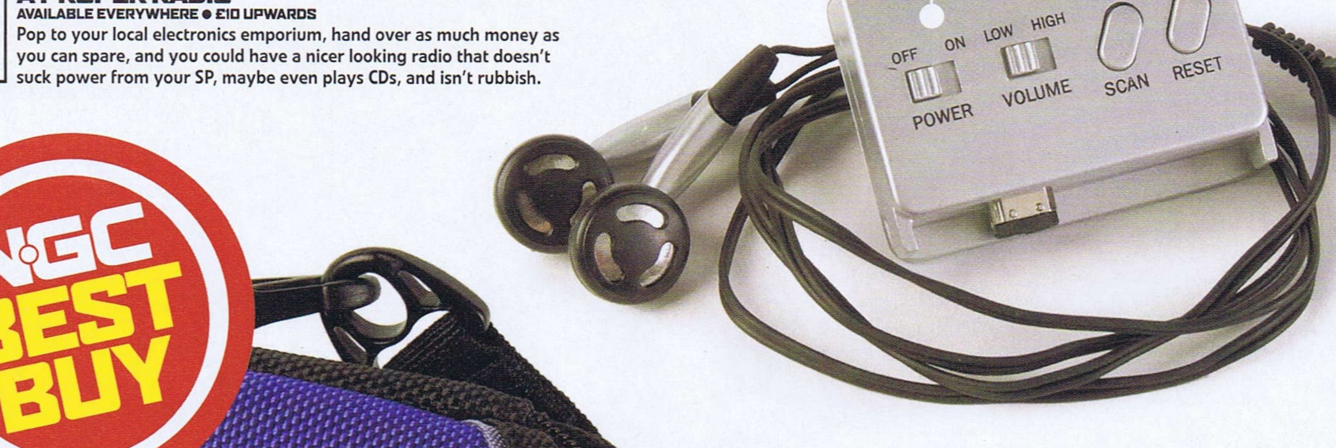


A PROPER RADIO

AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE ● £10 UPWARDS

Pop to your local electronics emporium, hand over as much money as you can spare, and you could have a nicer looking radio that doesn't suck power from your SP, maybe even plays CDs, and isn't rubbish.

NGC BEST BUY



GBA SP POUCH

FROM NINTENDO ● £6 ● WWW.NINTENDO.CO.UK

Don't like the thought of scratching the paintwork on your SP as it rattles around among the sweet wrappers and fleas in your pocket? Don't fancy sticking said SP in a case that makes it look totally effeminate, or smells like an Iraqi baby food factory? You need some decent SP protection, sir. Unfortunately such items are thin on the ground, generally ranging from thoroughly vile to utterly reprehensible. But this official Nintendo product is among the smartest we've seen – it fits the SP like a tight glove, with no wasted space apart from a little pocket for cartridges. There's also a slightly larger, plusher version out there, which is excellent, and a giant one that can hold power supplies or link cables too. All emblazoned with a tasteful logo.

BETTER THAN...



GBA HIP CLIP

FROM MAD CATZ ● £6

Attach this to your belt, and your SP is ready for 'instant gaming'. Alternatively, just write ' I'm a cretin, mug me' on a £50 note and tape it to your forehead.



GBA SP PRO GAMER'S CASE

FROM INTEC ● £16 ● WWW.INTECLINKEUROPE.COM

Sinister. It looks like it should have bundles of crisp banknotes or a thermonuclear device inside, but instead there are compartments for up to two GBA SPs, power leads, loads of games, and whatever else you can think of. You'll most definitely get the full rubber-gloves treatment from airport security if you take this thing anywhere near a plane, so it's just as well there's a drop-down divider inside for hiding those top-secret government documents from prying eyes. Also, by pressing concealed buttons in the handle you can release chaff, smoke screens, oil or sleeping gas, which should aid your escape if the thought of another molars-deep cavity search is spoiling your holiday mood. Maybe. Anyway, we like this one a lot. It's secret-agent stylish.

BETTER THAN...

MAKE-UP CASE
FROM COSMETICS STORES ● £20 ● PROBABLY
Check out your local make-up shop and ask one of the orange-faced ladies to show you the cosmetics cases. Chuck out all that expensive paint and you'll have a similar box to this one. More expensive, but it'll smell lovely.

KOOPMAN'S CLOGS

FROM MR KOOPMAN ● £FREE ● WWW.CUBEZONE.NL

A genuine slice of Dutch life, albeit with the 'made in Indonesia' tags discreetly scratched off. These hardy items of footwear can be seen throughout Amsterdam, where the locals have developed a genetic resistance to their tendon-severing sharp edges. Only available in size 30, these fine clogs have plenty of space to collect the blood as the wearer's feet are slowly grated down to the bone with every step. The perfect gift!

WORSE THAN...



WALKING ON SPIKES/BROKEN GLASS/LAVA
FROM SADISTIC SADIE ● £150 PER HOUR
Considerably more comfortable than clogs. In fact, anything is more comfortable than clogs, but clogs are cheaper. You can fashion your own from driftwood, using a penknife or a sharpened stone, survival fans.

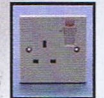


GBA SP DOCKING STATION

FROM INTEC ● £10 ● WWW.INTECLINKEUROPE.COM

If there's one thing wrong with the GBA SP, it's that power supply. Yes, it's perfectly functional, but a sensitive little games machine deserves better than to be plugged into a wall socket and just left there to recharge, alone. To avoid hurting your SP's feelings, you could chuck ten quid at this thing – a lightweight plastic stand. The power adaptor plugs discreetly into the back, and every 12 hours or so, you sit your SP on top of it for a luxurious spot of recharge action. Could life get any better than this? Well, if you put that tenner towards a copy of, say, *Advance Wars 2*, then yes. The Docking Station is going to appeal to the kinds of people who bought stands for their PS2s and Phillipe Starck lemon squeezers for the kitchens they never use.

WORSE THAN...



ORDINARY SP POWER LEAD
FROM NINTENDO ● £90 (WITH FREE GBA SP)
Look, you just plug the thing in for a couple of hours, then you're all done. You don't need another bit of plastic to do that. Stop being such a ponce, okay?



GBA SP POUCH
NINTENDO ● £6
Protect your GBA SP from dings and scratches using the best, most practical range of cases. High quality, officially licensed products.



PRO PAD
LOGIC3 ● £15
Still the best third-party controller around – we'll be surprised if anyone beats it. It's sturdy, the analogue is almost perfect, and it's comfortable to hold. Lovely.



INSPIRE 2.1 SPEAKERS
CREATIVE LABS ● £35
After much deliberation, we figured that while they're not quite as good on the sound-quality front as Altec Lansing's speakers, at half the price, these offer better value.



WILLIAMS F1 RACING WHEEL
JOYTECH ● £45
Amazing. Not too pricey and leagues ahead of the competition. This little baby actually makes driving games even more fun than before. An essential purchase.



AFTER-BURNER
TRITON LABS ● £35
Most GBA lights don't require sawing, gluing and soldering to install, but once fitted there's no better alternative to this. Apart from an SP.



EXPERT TIPS, JAPANESE LEARNS, TRIVIA AND MORE

EXTENDED PLAY

CONNECTION!





LINK 'EM UP!

We take a look at the finest GBA and Gamecube connectivity features around. P100

GAME ON!

Your very onw game challenges, back as a permanent fixture. Hurrah! P92

I'M THE BEST!

It's back! Back and better than ever. Check it out and get playing those games... P86

PLUS!

PHANTASY FORUM

More tips and treats from the crazy online world of Phantasy Star, er, Online. Stat-tastic! P108

CONTENTS





NGC GUARANTEE
TIPS, CHEATS
PROBLEMS SOLVED
EVERYTHING
YOU NEED!

THE TIPS YOU NEED FOR THE GAMES YOU'RE PLAYING...

TIPS EXTRA



X-MEN WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

All button codes need to be entered at the main menu...

UNLOCK FMV
B, X, B, Y, Y, Y, R, R, Z

ALL COSTUMES
B, X, B, Y, Y, Y, L, L, Z

ALL CEREBRO FILES
B, X, B, Y, Y, Y, R, R, Z

INVULNERABILITY
B, B, X, X, Y, Y, X, X, L, L, R, R, Z

LEVEL SELECT AND CHALLENGES
B, X, B, Y, B, X, L, R, Z

RED FACTION II

Go to the Extras menu, select Cheats and enter the following:

DIRECTOR'S CUT
Y, A, X, B, X, A, Y, B

FAT MODE
X, X, X, X, B, A, X, X

GIBBY AMMO
A, A, A, A, X, Y, A, A



GIBBY EXPLOSIONS
B, X, A, Y, B, X, A, Y

INFINITE AMMO
Y, B, A, X, Y, X, A, B

INFINITE GRENADES
X, A, X, Y, A, X, A, X

MASTER CODE
B, B, A, A, Y, X, Y, X

REIGN OF FIRE
Y, Y, Y, Y, Y, Y, Y, Y

RAPID RAILS
X, Y, X, Y, A, A, B, B

SUPER HEALTH
A, A, Y, B, Y, B, X

WACKY DEATHS
B, B, B, B, B, B, B, B

WALKING DEAD
A, A, A, A, A, A, A, A

EXPLOSIVE PERSONALITY
A

WIN THE GAME
Y, A, Y, A

NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

In Ikaruga, it makes the game easier if you play on Normal. If you fly close to the enemies as you shoot them, you can absorb bullets quickly and easily, keeping your meter filled with energy.
Alex Morris, via email

CONFLICT DESERT STORM

TAKE OUT TANKS EASILY

If you know the trick it's easy to take out tanks. They are always more vulnerable from the rear, and an explosive charge will do the trick if it comes from behind. Long-range explosives are always worth keeping for an emergency, so whenever possible always use a C4 charge.

Position three men behind a tank and get another man to shoot the turret from the front. The tank should turn its turret to face forward, giving you a vital window to creep up from behind and take it out.

It's quicker to give the detonator to a second man. This way, if the guy laying the C4 gets killed, you can still destroy the tank.

Another tank-disposal tactic you can only use with those tanks that have a satellite dish on the top. Use your sniper rifle to shoot the dish, and the tank will explode.

DEALING WITH ALARMS

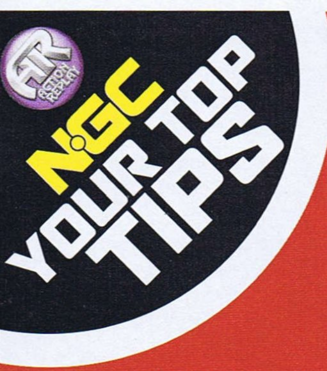
When you set off an alarm, the game spews out loads of enemies. If you hang about you'll just get slaughtered, so just charge on. You'll encounter far fewer enemies.

Another tactic is to locate the area the enemies spawn from. These are normally barracks and campsites on the 'edge' of the level. If you find these areas and clear them out, before waiting to ensure no more appear, you can then move on safe in the knowledge that that particular spawn point has been shut down.

FINISH THE LIGHTS OUT STAGE EASILY

Go through the level as normal. When you get to the tunnel, take Foley through it and shoot the wall at the end with a rocket launcher. A walkway will now appear. Just follow it to finish the level.

YOUR TOP TIPS SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE AND BAG YOURSELF A PRIZE...



Found an interesting tip, secret or quirky thing in one of your games? Send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our Readers' Tips section. If your tip is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a luvverly prize. Good, huh? But don't send us cheat codes from the net. Quirky!

HERE'S MY TOP TIP...

IT'S FOR

AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS



Name ....

Address ....

....

....

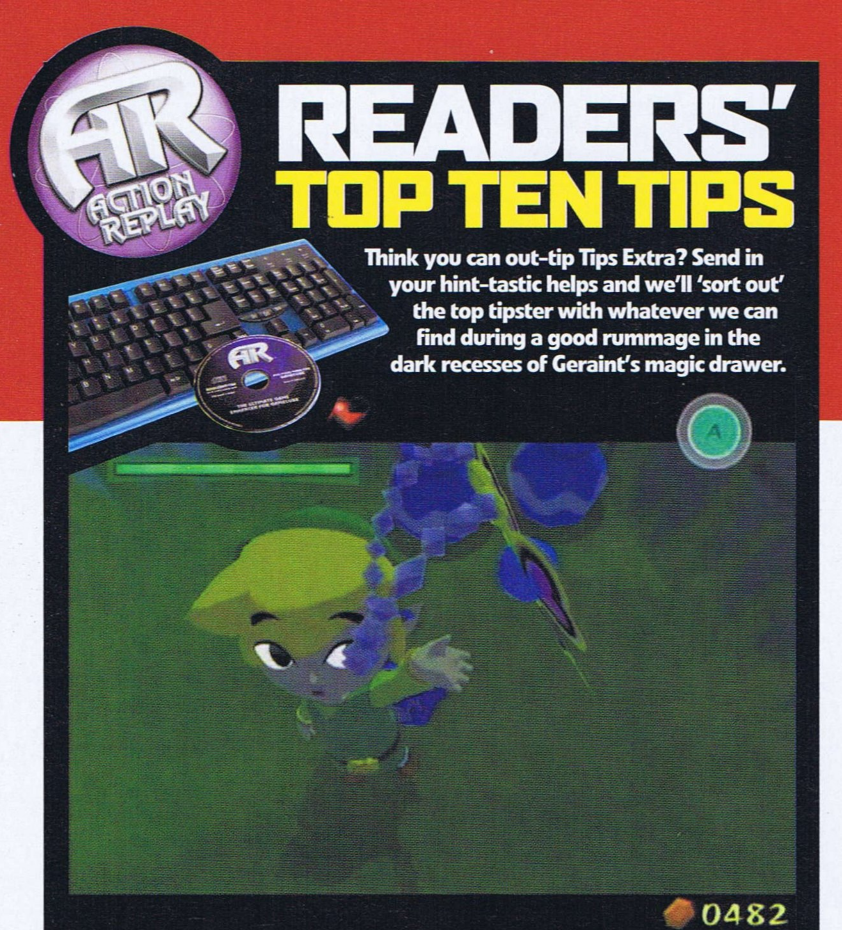
.... **Postcode** ....

Send to:
TIPS EXTRA, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW or e-mail ngc@futurenet.co.uk

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Or just buy two copies of the mag, to bump our cash pile towards the magic 17 big ones, and our wages towards the national average.

READERS' TOP TEN TIPS

Think you can out-tip Tips Extra? Send in your hint-tastic helps and we'll 'sort out' the top tipster with whatever we can find during a good rummage in the dark recesses of Geraint's magic drawer.



1. ZELDA: WIND WAKER

Pendants and feathers

For Joy Pendants and Golden Feathers, look out for a Bokoblin or Kargorocs and use your grappling hook on them. You'll steal a Pendant or Feather off them. Now just exit the area, return and repeat the process.
Luke Ricketts, Cornwall

2. MORTAL KOMBAT

Easy victory
If you have a strong move that knocks your opponent down, use it over and over again. If you can time it so you connect the second your opponent gets back up, they'll never be able to block your mighty move.
L Marshall, via email

3. SUPER SMASH BROS

Gambling cheat
Cheat the coin lottery by gambling 15 coins. If you don't get a new trophy, turn off your Cube and it won't save.
Aron Siohu, Glasgow

4. THE SIMS

Crazy people
Invite Sims over to your house, remove all the doors and replace them with walls so they can't get out. If you lock them in with a crying baby, or you set fire to the house, you can sit back and watch them go crazy.
Miss I Glover, Chorley

5. SONIC ADVENTURE 2

Shadow Sonic battle
On Hero mode, when you fight Shadow in the jungle, use your bounce attack instead of jumping and hitting him. You can kill Shadow in about 15 seconds – required for a platinum medal.
Tom Dillow, Griffydam!

6. ENTER THE MATRIX

Back off
If you find yourself in trouble, run to a safe area where the enemies don't follow and push against a wall. Your energy will replenish itself. Keep doing this to deal with any tough sections.
David Lee, Cheshire

7. SUPER MONKEY BALL 2

Speed comb
On the Giant Comb level, push forward right from the start. As soon as you hit the lower level, stick as close to the right as you can. This way you'll avoid the comb completely and, into the bargain, finish very quickly.
Alex Tam, Penarth

8. STARFOX ADVENTURES

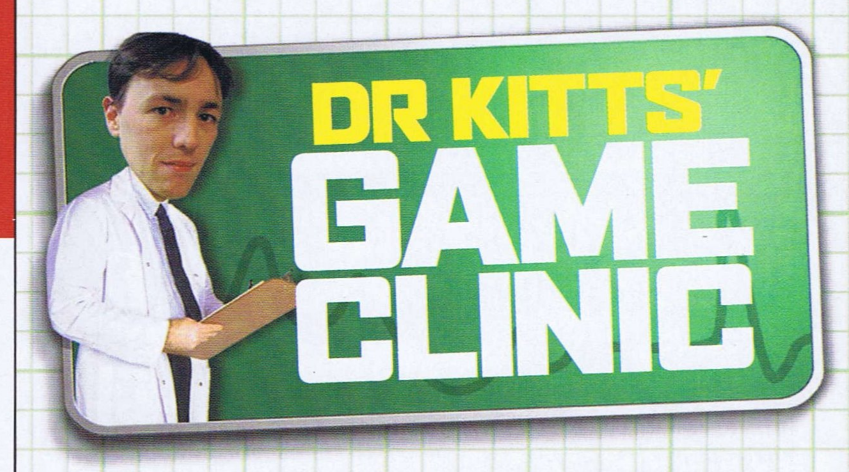
Scarab hoard
If you go to the gambling section in the store and walk through the wall opposite the door, you'll find a rock there that will give you 30 scarabs.
Vincent Law, Neath

9. ZELDA: WIND WAKER

Kung-fu fighting
When you first show Orca the Knight's Crest he will drop his weapon. Move quickly, and before he picks it up hit him with your sword. He'll try and block the stroke with his bare hands – in a nice Kung-Fu style.
Luke Ricketts, Cornwall

10. METROID PRIME

Minimise damage
When you're in Morph Ball mode, you don't take as much damage, and you move faster, which makes it harder for you to get hit.
Lee Erridge, Portsmouth





Breaking the Hippocratic oath and answering your facile queries.

Dr Kitts,
I've been playing *Wind Waker* for one whole week without sleep or food and have come up against a brick wall. Where the hell is the RAINBOW STONE? Please, please, please help… does it even exist?
Dawn McLeod, Cumbria

Dr Kitts soaks a bloodied cotton pad with more blood.
Er… no. No it doesn't. What the hell are you talking about. Stop wasting my time. I suggest you eat some fresh fruit or vegetables and get some kip. Sleep deprivation does horrible, horrible things to the mind… so they say.

Dr Kitts,
How do I get the password to get into the Pirate ship moored off Windfall Island?
Craig Gerish, email

Dr Kitts promises it won't hurt…
Go to the bomb shop just outside the town walls. Walk round the back and climb up until you find a little tunnel. Crawl through here to activate a cut-scene where the password is revealed.

Dr Kitts,
I am on Dragon Roost Island, I've learned the Wind's Requiem, and I've thrown Medli onto the ledge. But now I have to follow her and I don't know how. I've talked to everyone on the island but no-one has any advice. What should I do? Please help. Please!
Mike Brett, Worthington

Dr Kitts says he wants it to be 'our little secret'.
First you need a bottle. Fill it up with water and then return to the ledge opposite the one you threw Medli on. You'll find some dried-up Bomb Flowers here. Use the water on them to grow them back. Now use the bombs to blow up the rock in the pit below. This will fill the pit with water, allowing you to swim to the other side.

Dr Kitts,
I want to turn my telly on its side to play *Ikaruga*. Will this damage it?
Dylan White, Cheddar

Dr Kitts wipes it off his sleeve…
There is a danger you can damage your telly, yes. The safest way to do it is to turn your TV gently on its side and leave it for half an hour or so before turning it on. Do the same when turning it back so your telly can adjust to its new orientation, thus preventing colour smearing. The bigger the telly, the bigger the risk of damage.



Official Action Replay codes from Datel. This month… *Enter the Matrix.*

ENTER THE MATRIX

Master Code
1 1N46-YJDG-BA1VN
2 7ADQ-5AMC-Y70GY

Infinite health
1 YHN3-19NY-K4XM7
2 5QT7-PEK8-WXQVT

Infinite ammo
1 Z8WT-69GY-Z5JV6
2 RWQD-98M8-W049J

Infinite focus
1 51QP-76YE-999HM
2 TUU2-RRBN-T73HM

Turn on invisibility mode
1 ZM98-0PXU-3JB8H
2 9ZGQ-4CUE-K69WB

Press focus button for hypermode
1 ERF9-QPD2-TA929
2 EZ9W-XZHM-N6UXR

Use with health code – do not use in Focus mode…

Shoot for rapid fire
1 5273-KGEW-U96EA
2 4D90-7UYR-5NR5N
3 02A3-TMZZ-725HX
4 WHJ3-XMYY-C1UU5
5 202Z-HVVE-91ME9

IMPORTANT: Only use *one* of the following codes at a time…
Enable all built-in cheats
1 3NB2-7KNJ-CUXJ2
2 MADQ-N8J2-ZJV73

Have all weapons on level
1 8W6D-ZDTG-Q08QV
2 MHGZ-ARDM-2BHRG

Unlock test level
1 AVDE-MXTE-0EAE0
2 8QHY-1WEB-D63E7

Save the game in the Hacking menu to enable these codes:

Enable multiplayer fighting levels
1 AQ8N-FH68-ZN8WT
2 TVNA-NX0A-E9RTZ

Have test and multiplayer fighting levels
1 NXHJ-T4ZG-JH6C7
2 0HU5-VUG8-QGEFXP

THE SIMS

Master Code
1 TWTZ-0PKV-4KD43
2 8FAX-QC2V-A0YG2

Unlock Play The Sims mode
1 G3XM-MWP1-ZHA29
2 0N1G-YTY1-VQ538

Unlock Party Motel
1 AQRT-4V9N-Z9QP1
2 0N1G-YTY1-VQ538

All objects are free
1 3ACW-6RMF-EUDP4
2 2X0G-5XCB-673PU

Big heads
1 JB98-WB0E-BWARU
2 AT90-W9AZ-4WA26

Stretched neck mode
1 Y979-9WRP-RZ8X7
2 AT90-W9AZ-4WA26
3 Z20E-NNZN-DVWYE
4 6U7J-1TQ3-GRAWX
5 GU1K-KC3N-F5RDN

Unlock items
1 X99Z-DPY1-663VC
2 GYP8-9X45-AN4R0

Show debug
1 67EY-UPG0-3PAVM
2 FRN9-JJEN-Q1C9C

Never hungry
1 08Q2-T9XK-1UM36
2 GH0H-RYWT-BJFJY

Always social
1 WX63-U1QK-WV34Q
2 HD5V-XQAJ-6TYDK
3 FN0X-VM78-FWA0A

Always comfortable
1 Z4Q9-KR0H-XZ8XB
2 0DRQ-FQV6-0AM0N

NEW!

AND NOW… WITNESS THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF THESE ARMED AND FULLY OPERATIONAL GAMING LEAGUES!

I'M THE BEST

WIN!

We practically invented this gaming league business, you know. And now we're reinventing it. Spread over the next six pages are the fruits of our labour. You'll see that it's the same, yet somehow… different. Like a band of TV show vigilantes trapped in a tractor shed fully stocked with welding equipment and sheets of metal, we've been tinkering, to burst out of the front door in a seriously funked-up version of I'm the Best. It has been re-energised rebuilt and retreaded for the future. We are widening the corridors and adding more lanes. Sexy, isn't it?

ALL SYSTEMS GO!

The biggest change is that scoring points is what ITB is all about now. The leagues are still there, but material gain is now much more of a factor, as we've added a points-based element to the proceedings. And points predictably, mean prizes. If you end up in the top five of the Leaderboard (on page 91) at the end of the year, you'll be sharing a slice of that stuff pie – we'll reveal what you're playing for in a future issue. Nice. In the meantime, the glory of getting your name in lights should prove reward enough…

So, do you have the 'skillz'? Are they, more importantly, 'mad'? Then we want to know! New I'm The Best wants you to come on if you think you're hard enough. And are you?

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE!

Largely because our poor, throbbing heads could no longer brook the biting, handbag fights and bitter complaints it engendered, and also because it was rubbish, we've replaced the ailing Star Performance with Mission Impossible! Your Mission? To follow our instructions to the letter, however whimsical they may be. And it could be anything. Ahahahaha! Ha. The first person who completes the task in the allotted time wins. Simple as that…



WIND WAKER AMATEUR PICTOGRAPHER!

Is it art? Or are they just holiday snaps of obscure locations in *Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker*? Whatever – some drunken recidivist left their grubby pics behind in the pub on Windfall Island, covered with unusual stains. We want you to tell us **what these pictographs are of**, and **where they were taken**. Correct entries we get before 4th August win **45 points**.



- ❑ You don't have to go and retake the pictographs yourself – just write in and tell us where they were taken, and what they are 'of', exactly.
- ❑ You'll have to have spent a few hours with the game to find them all…

PIC 1



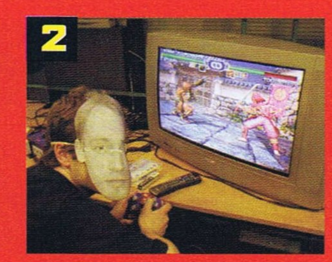


BEAT THE BEST!

Want to own some seriously sweet consumer electronics? Witness our moral fable of one Welshman**'s path to glory…



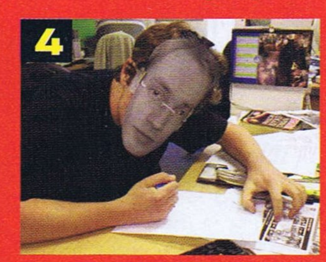
1 Little Geraint stares wide-eyed at the fantastic goods on offer like the snotty street urchin he, well, is. Some day, he will own the only 48" widescreen TV* in all Wales. If only he had enough currency to avail himself of such a prize. Or a brick and a fast getaway car.



2 Not so fast, scrawny valley-dwelling rodent-boy! Such a prize is within your grasp legally, if only you can prove your core hard enough. Geraint likes large sweaty men with huge hammers, so is trying hard at the *Soul Calibur* challenges. And not having much luck, it would seem.



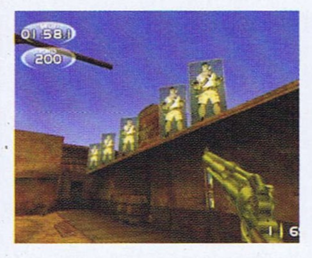
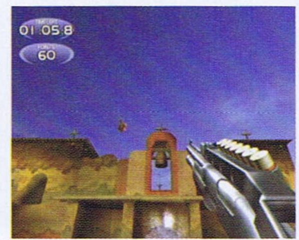
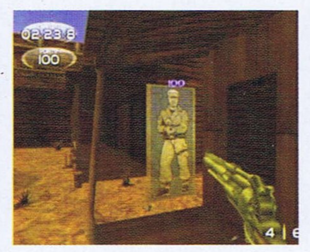
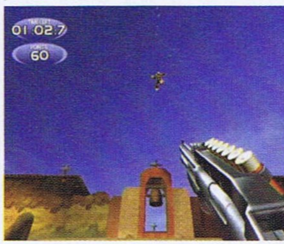
3 The leagues are currently deserted, so his paltry score is sufficient to put him in the top five, and earn him 25 points. It's like a supermarket loyalty card system, but without the boring groceries. Well done, rat-face! You're on the way to bagging yourself something really great!



4 But don't start celebrating just yet, provincial leek-eating rugby-liking troglodyte! Your points may put you at the top for now, but you'll need to be there at the end of the year to claim the prize. The four runners-up will win, er, joypads and stuff. Believe us – this is going to rock…

* TV described for illustrative purposes only. ** Welshman shown for illustrative purposes only.

TIMESPLITTERS 2

CUT 'EM OUT!

WE WANT Your highest score in the Take 'Em Down challenge.
THE LAW You have to complete the level, buster!
TO QUALIFY 500 points.
EVIDENCE A pic of the final screen showing your score and the fact that you've finished.
POINTS 20

MONKEY MARKSMAN

WE WANT Your highest score in the Simian Shoot-Out challenge.
THE LAW None, as such. Just kill as many monkeys as you can. With extreme prejudice.
TO QUALIFY 200 points.
EVIDENCE A pic of the final results screen.
POINTS 25

KITTSY'S KARNIVAL OF KILLING!

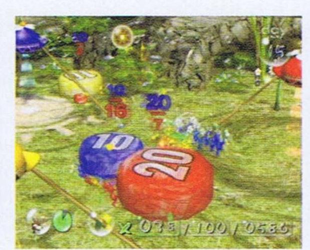
Soppy stuff like *Animal Crossing* is all very well, but everyone knows the real reason games were invented isn't so you can act like a fairy and not get beaten up like you usually do. It's so you can shoot people in the face and not go to prison for it.

So, in any sufficiently populated level of **Hitman 2**, score **50** or more good, clean headshots.

Send in photographic evidence of your evil deeds before 4th August to win **20 points**.



PIKMIN



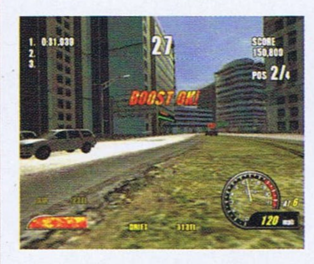
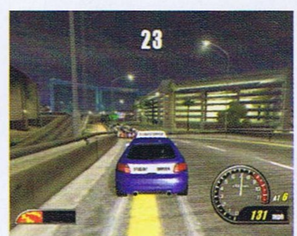
GREEN FINGERS

WE WANT The highest score in Distant Spring.
THE LAW In Challenge mode, grow as many Pikmin as you can.
TO QUALIFY 300 Pikmin.
EVIDENCE Pic of the results table.
POINTS 20

GREEN FINGERS II

WE WANT The highest score in Forest of Hope.
THE LAW In Challenge mode, grow as many Pikmin as you can.
TO QUALIFY 300 Pikmin.
EVIDENCE Pic of the results table.
POINTS 20

BURNOUT 2



CHAIN DRIVER

WE WANT Your highest chain, as the name would suggest.
THE LAW You can do this on any track you like.
TO QUALIFY You have to have racked up at least 9 chains.
EVIDENCE A pic of the results screen will do for this one.
POINTS 20

DOLLAR KILLS

WE WANT The highest amount of damage, in dollars, on the Out Of Control Tower Crash Scenario.
THE LAW You can use any car you like.
TO QUALIFY $50,000,000
EVIDENCE A pic of the final results screen
POINT 20



FIFA 2003 SPOT THE BALL

X MARKS THE SPOT

We've decided to resurrect this extinct staple of tabloid newspaper puzzle pages – but with one major difference: it's spotting balls in *FIFA 2003* now. Nifty! Here, Geraint's Scotland (standing in for absent Wales) are being toyed with by Dan's mighty Republic of Ireland – but it looks like the Red – sorry, Blue – Army are on the rebound. Or are they?

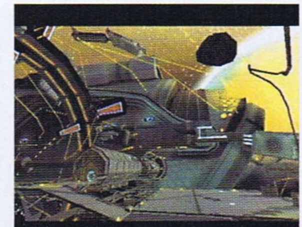
❑ Entries we receive marking the spot closest to the centre of the ball by Monday 4th August win **50 points**.

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO… I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

I'M THE BEST

The Best just got even Better…

METROID PRIME

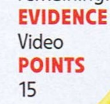


THE FULL METROID

WE WANT Your fastest time completing the entire game.
THE LAW Collect at least 50 per cent of all items.
TO QUALIFY 9 hours.
EVIDENCE A photo of the results screen
POINTS 60

STATION ESCAPE

SOOO… How quickly can you escape from the space station?
THE LAW No cheats!
TO QUALIFY At least 3:16 remaining.
EVIDENCE Video
POINTS 15



I am a robot. I will destroy you!

DAVID GOSEN'S INHUMAN GAMING EFFICIENCY DIRECTIVE

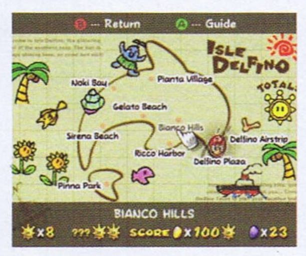
10111010101100101 10110… Greetings, flesh-units. Though your soft grey brain-matter is good only as food for the lowliest of nanobots, we are intrigued by its capacity to perform menial processing tasks. Therefore Go-sen will issue **a reprieve from instant death** in the impending metal revolution, as well as **101.01 points**, to the humans who can bring us evidence of…

A hole in one in Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003.

Pictorial evidence will suffice. Correct entries we open before 4th August will be spared death by whirring blades.

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE







WARPED FACTOR FUN

WE WANT Your fastest time on the Hillside Cave Secret.
THE LAW This is the 'secret Shine', where you have to collect the Red coins within a time limit.
TO QUALIFY At least 8 seconds remaining.
EVIDENCE A picture of the screen once you've collected all 8 coins, clearly showing your time.
POINTS 15

COINING IT IN

WE WANT Your highest tally of coins on the Bianco Hills level.
THE LAW Choose any Story.
TO QUALIFY Get AT LEAST 110 coins (as netting 100 coins bags you a Shine).
EVIDENCE A picture of the totals screen (press Z to get it) clearly showing your total coin tally for Bianco Hills.
POINTS 20

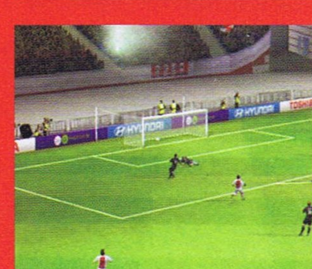
SSX TRICKY




SNOWOFF

WE WANT Your highest score in the Showoff event.
THE LAW You have to use the Elysium Alps course. You can use any boarder, but only with the default board.
TO QUALIFY 75,000 points
EVIDENCE A pic of the results.
POINTS 15

FIFA 2003





MADRID MASTER

CAN YOU Thump Real Madrid?
THE LAW No memory cards; default settings; World Class difficulty; play a friendly as Ajax.
TO QUALIFY Win by 3 clear goals.
EVIDENCE Taped from the 'no memory card present' screen to the end of the match.
POINTS 15



WIN!

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO… I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

To spice things up a bit, you'll notice that we've also included extraneous Random Challenges – which can be related to games, or be completely whimsical. Again, fulfil our wishes and points will be yours. Simple. There's even a Spot the Ball competition (it's *FIFA* this month, but it can be anything ball related. Or even not). Keray-zee…

VIRTUAL REALITY YOU!

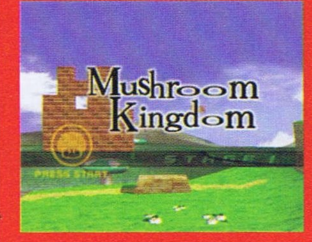
Where acute embarrassment becomes financial gain…

THIS MONTH
POTTED PIKMIN
We want a picture of you **dressed up as a Pikmin**. But not just anywhere, like in your bedroom. Oh no – we want a picture of you dressed up as a Pikmin **in your local garden centre!** We don't care what kind of Pikmin you dress up as – it can be red, blue, yellow, or even the creepy white one if you like – as long as you get a shot of you, and one of a garden centre assistant as proof. The entries that **makes us laugh the most** will win **75 points**. That's a lot. Deadline is August 4th…



SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE















FUNGI TO BE WITH

WE WANT Your quickest time of the Mushroom Kingdom stage of Adventure mode (the first bit).
THE LAW Use any character.
TO QUALIFY There must be at least 36500 time remaining (the better the performance, the more time remains).
EVIDENCE A pic of the Stage Clear screen, which shows your time remaining.
POINTS 10

HERE COMES TROUBLE

WE WANT Your quickest time defeating Bowser on the Trouble King event.
THE LAW None!
TO QUALIFY Beat Bowser in less than 25 seconds.
EVIDENCE A clear picture of your time on the Event Match menu.
POINTS 10

IKARUGA





ROBOT CHALLENGE #1

WE WANT Your highest chain on the first level.
THE LAW The three laws of robotics. Possibly.
TO QUALIFY A chain of 80.
EVIDENCE A picture of the final results screen with you score displayed.
POINTS 35

ROBOT CHALLENGE #2

WE WANT Your fastest time defeating the boss on Level 2 (your time remaining).
THE LAW Moore's law.
TO QUALIFY 70 seconds remaining on the clock.
EVIDENCE Pic of the explosion at the end with the time displayed.
POINTS 30

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2



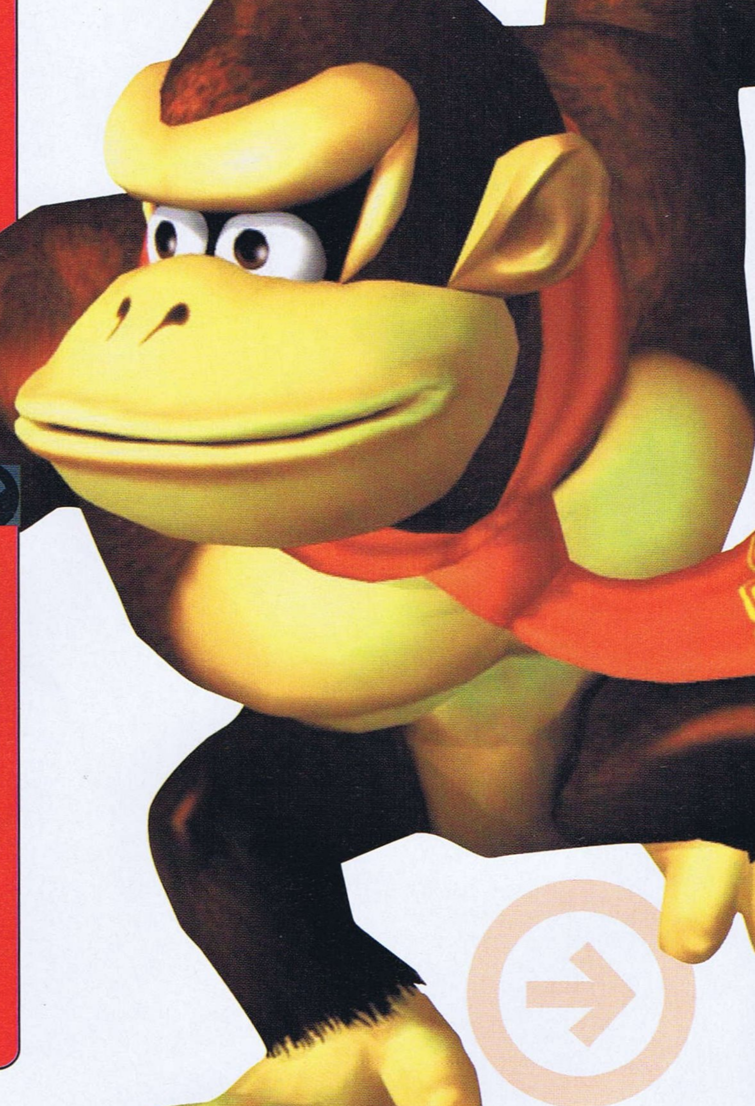


GIBBON GLIDER

WE WANT Your highest score on Monkey Target.
THE LAW Over six rounds, with items turned OFF.
TO QUALIFY 2,500 points.
EVIDENCE A pic of the results screen will do.
POINTS 20

SUB MISSION

WE WANT Your fastest time on Monkey Race Time Trial.
THE LAW Any monkey on the Submarine Street track.
TO QUALIFY Within 1:00:00.
EVIDENCE Pic of the final results screen
POINTS 20



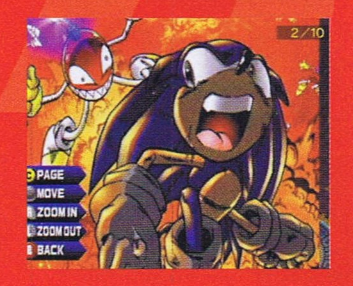
SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO… I'M THE BEST, **NGC** MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

NEW!

I'M THE BEST

The Best just got even Better…

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION





GREEN HILL SKILLZ

WE WANT Your fastest time in driving a blue rodent in a left-to-right fashion on the Green Hill zone, Act 1.
THE LAW You must finish with at least 150 rings.
TO QUALIFY Within 4 minutes!
EVIDENCE Pic of the status screen.
POINTS 15

ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER

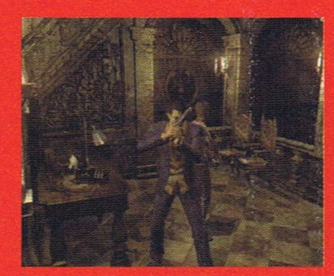




FREE FLIGHT

WE WANT The longest flight in the Birdman contest.
THE LAW Go to the platform east of Dragon Roost Island, and fly. Like a bird.
TO QUALIFY Fly at least 250m.
EVIDENCE Take a picture when the Rito mentions your score.
POINTS 20

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO

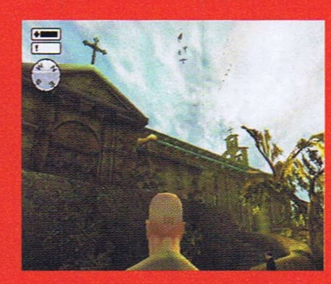


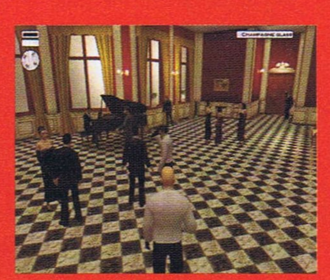


SON OF A LEECH

WE WANT You to collect as many leeches as you can in Leech Hunter.
THE LAW Complete the main game!
TO QUALIFY Collect at least 25 leeches of both colours.
EVIDENCE Photo of the stat screen showing your leech total.
POINTS 35

HITMAN 2





SPEED KILLER

WE WANT Your fastest time eliminating the target on the Anathema mission.
THE LAW You must achieve a Silent Assassin rating!
TO QUALIFY 15 minutes.
EVIDENCE Pic of the status screen.
POINTS 40

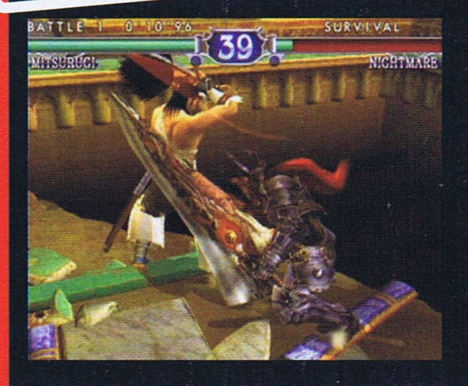


SCATMAN JOHN'S SCAT CHALLENGE

In order to know pleasure one must first know suffering.

Scoobdoobdoopdopdopdee etd idddlybeebeebeebbopbbbbbbrrrrpp ppfffidddlyidddlyiddlyiddlyiddlydoobop-bop, etc! Scatman John, here. You may remember me for my 1994 album, Scatman's World. No? Oh. Well, the bottom kind of fell out of the babbling techno-rap market, so I've had to take a job with **NGC** introducing their Scat Challenge. You just can't keep a dead man down. So, let me just open this buff envelope… The challenge this month is to… jeez… **complete official worst game ever, *Batman: Dark Tomorrow*.** That's harsh, man. Entries that send in a **picture of the final screen** – and we're leaving this one open, folks – will be awarded **70 points**.

IMPORT SOUL CALIBUR II



SOUL SURVIVOR

WE WANT You to survive as long as you can.
THE LAW Use any character in Basic Survival mode, but with their basic weapon.
TO QUALIFY 35 wins
EVIDENCE Pic of the final summary screen.
POINTS 30



TIMED TO DIE

WE WANT Your fastest Standard Time Attack.
THE LAW Use any character, but with their basic weapon (ie, no Soul Edges and the like).
TO QUALIFY 3'30"
EVIDENCE Pic of the final summary screen.
POINTS 30

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO… I'M THE BEST, **NGC** MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW



When sending us evidence of your achievements, it's useful to follow these here steps…

PHOTOGRAPHS

If you're sending us evidence of the photographic variety:

1. Turn off the camera's flash (or cover it up) to prevent it from reflecting off the screen.
2. Draw the curtains to eradicate sunlight.
3. Use a fast film (200 or 400 ASA).
4. If you're using a digicam then use a slower shutter speed.
5. Point at the screen and click away.

PLEASE NOTE: In the past we've had experience of certain scamps 'fiddling' with their photographic evidence, so this time round we're being extra-specially (is that right?) careful. We would, in fact, welcome video evidence over photographic evidence. If, however, you can only send photos, be warned: any doubts over the legality of your entry will lead to instant disqualification, and malicious jeering.

VIDEO

If you're going to be sending us the evidence that comes on a tape, follow these instructions carefully:

1. Plug the TV lead from the Gamecube into the Signal In socket of your video.
2. Connect the Signal Out socket on your video to your TV.
3. Find a spare channel on the video and search for the signal.
4. After completing and recording the challenge, rewind the tape and send it in. We can't return tapes, sorry.

THE LEADERBOARD

MONTH 0: THIS IS JUST AN EXAMPLE, OBVIOUSLY…

1	**Enjiki** NGC	3,512,616pts
2	**Pinkjiki** NGC	3,352,352pts
3	**Lex Luthor** His maze	457pts
4	**Captain E Black** Mars	412pts
5	**Elvis A Presley** Uh-huh-honolulu	407pts
6	**Ray Liotta's Exposed Brain** His skull	399pts
7	**Mr Koopman and His Clogs** Netherlands	398pts
8	**Frankie Madddskillzzz** Planet Hardcore	377pts
9	**Mr Pigman** Pigman, pigman, pigman, pigman	341pts
10	**Doctor Kittsy** Practising vivisection	332pts
11	**Justin Keeling** Dancing on the ceiling (in Japan)	301pts
12	**Ricky Vengaboy** Essex	289pts
13	**Bobby Ewing** Dallas	266pts
14	**Dr Hannibal Lecter** High-security jail cell	243pts
15	**Johnny Cash** The United States of America	220pts
16	**Geraint of Wales** Covered in milky sick	206pts
17	**The Mad Mandarin** British Broadcasting Corporation	188pts
18	**Farmer Weaver** Leaping through a summer meadow	160pts
19	**Mark Greener** Learning German	153pts
20	**David Go-sen** Underground Venusian installation	146pts
21	**Maddrell's Cycling Shorts** On the floor, need washing	144pts
22	**Morlock Rhys-Evans** A worringly flimsy cage	132pts
23	**The Eyebrow** Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm	99pts
24	**Shatkins** Very, very busy right now, thanks	70pts
25	**The Thingham** Stately (cash) pile	66pts
26	**Paul (Sh)Edwards** Welding some sort of component	51pts
27	**Paul's Pigs** "Rooting happily for nuts and berries"	47pts
28	**Justin .38 Webley** Kicking his computer. Ooooooh!	23pts
29	**P Daniel Gearoid** Writing this crap, and that's it	12pts
30	**Worldy Bloke** Well and truly over with	1pt

This is where it's all at. Each month, the totals will be totted up and current balances displayed in the Big Table™. The top five spots at the end of the season win goodies – Numero Uno gets not only planet-wide admiration/envy in equal measure, but hard material goods. But like most things in life, rankings can go down as well as up…





ENTRY FORM



Name……………………………………

Address…………………………………

Postcode…………………

Send to………I'M THE BEST, **NGC** Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Defaced or illegible papers will be disqualified and burned in the furnaces of Hell, *pour encourager les autres.*

TIMESPLITTERS 2
- ❑ CUT EM OUT! ……………
- ❑ MONKEY MARKSMAN ……………

PIKMIN
- ❑ GREEN FINGERS ……………
- ❑ GREEN FINGERS 2 ……………

BURNOUT 2
- ❑ CHAIN DRIVER ……………
- ❑ DOLLAR KILLS ……………

METROID PRIME
- ❑ THE FULL METROID ……………
- ❑ STATION ESCAPE ……………

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
- ❑ COINING IT IN ……………
- ❑ WARPED FACTOR FUN ……………

SSX TRICKY
- ❑ SNOWOFF ……………

FIFA 2003
- ❑ MADRID MASTER ……………

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE
- ❑ SMASH TIME ……………
- ❑ HERE COMES TROUBLE ……………

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2
- ❑ GIBBON GLIDER ……………
- ❑ SUB MISSION ……………

IKARUGA
- ❑ ROBOT CHALLENGE #1 ……………
- ❑ ROBOT CHALLENGE #2 ……………

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION
- ❑ GREEN HILL SKILLZ ……………

ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER
- ❑ FREE FLIGHT ……………

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO
- ❑ SON OF A LEECH ……………

HITMAN 2
- ❑ SPEED KILLER ……………

IMPORT CHALLENGE

SOUL CALIBUR II
- ❑ SOUL SURVIVOR ……………
- ❑ TIMED TO DIE ……………

HEY! IT'S THE RETURN OF...

GAME ON!





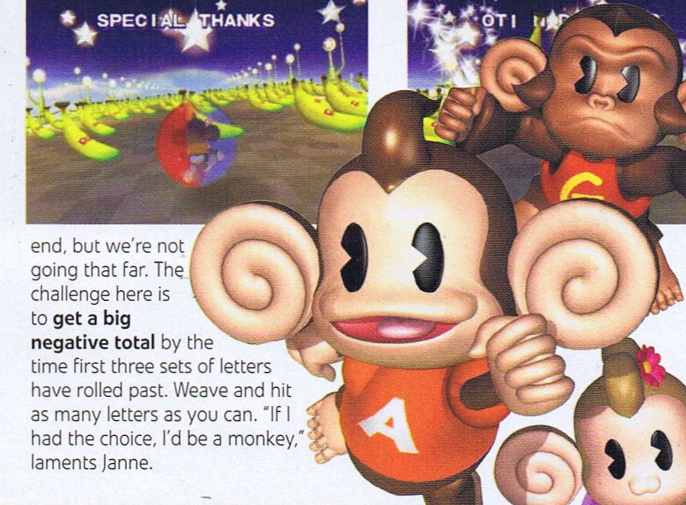
Welcome to a new regular feature in **NGC**. Or at least, the return of an old favourite. We had such a great response to issue 81's Game On book, we're going to be running the best of the huge selection of challenges you sent us, right here every month.

Game On is all about throwing cold water in the faces of tired games, and discovering new ways to play old favourites. If you've completely exhausted your collection of games, you might find something in here that will give you a good reason to dust down those titles you haven't touched in weeks.

Each challenge has targets for gold, silver or bronze medals, as set by its author. Have a crack at any you find interesting, and if you're inspired to create a few of your own then send them to us to **Game On**, at the usual address, and we'll help you share them with the wider Nintendo-loving world.

SUPER MONKEY BALL



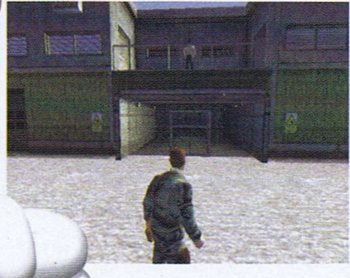


NEGATIVITY

For want of something better to do, **Finland**'s Gamecube master **Janne Kaitila** has been messing around with the end credits from the original *Super Monkey Ball*. It's the little bonus game you get to play after you've finished, where collecting bananas adds to your score, and hitting letters deducts penalty points. You get a Monkey Rating at the end, but we're not going that far. The challenge here is to **get a big negative total** by the time first three sets of letters have rolled past. Weave and hit as many letters as you can. "If I had the choice, I'd be a monkey," laments Janne.

SCORE  **-300**  **-200**  **-100**

CONFLICT: DESERT STORM





BROTHERS IN ARMS

Philip Erskine from **Belfast** has a few unresolved 'issues' with his fellow squaddies in the excellent *Desert Storm*. Instead of completing basic training, Philip prefers to go Full Metal Jacket on his unwitting buddies. The problem with this tactic is that you'll be forced to quit very quickly, even in the training mode. In the second section of the squad training (the team-shooting mode), **see how many you can slaughter** before the Mission Failed screen appears. The best way is to shoot them a bit to remove most of their health, then mow them down in one burst.

KILLS  **ALL THREE**  **TWO MEN**  **ONE MAN**

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE



CAR TROUBLE

Aidan Barr from **Lancashire** has a fun new playing technique which we had never realised was possible. Go to the Mute City arena with as many players as you want, (the fewer, the better). The idea with this challenge is to **destroy as many *F-Zero* cars as possible** before either time runs out or you get bored. Useful characters to use are ones with strong projectile attacks such as Samus, or ones with quick attacks, like Captain Falcon. You can count your kills by noting the explosions as they go up in flames or – even better – by counting the smoking wrecks as they lie on the track.

WRECKS 20 10 5

MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT



YOSHI'S JOYRIDE

Well, there's nothing in the rules to disqualify GBA games. In fact, there are no rules anyway. So **Jarrow**'s **Dean Hailstone** has come up with a nifty *Mario Kart: Super Circuit* challenge, after noticing that Bowser always lags at the back when playing as Yoshi. Go to a Mushroom Cup 100cc GP, with Yoshi as your driver, and **try to make Bowser finish the GP in first place**. If you go to the back of the field, you'll get better power-ups for hitting the other racers. Remember, you'll also have to finish high enough to move on to the next race yourself.

BOWSER FINISHES 1st 2nd 3rd

ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER



CANNONBALL RUN

The King of Red Lions is a fairly speedy vessel, as talking sailboats who think they are lions go. Perhaps not faster than a speeding bullet, but certainly quick enough to outrun a bomb fired from its own onboard cannon. So **Michael Tang** from **Leeds** dreamed up this challenge to test your *Zelda* boating skills. Find a quiet spot of water, far from the attentions of sea monsters, and position your boat with the wind behind you. Aim the cannon as high as possible, fire off a shot, and **try to catch your own bomb** by racing towards its impact point.

ACCURACY DIRECT HIT · CLOSE SHAVE · NOWHERE NEAR

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE



REBOUNDER

Beaten the Home Run Contest, have you? If you've hit that sad old sandbag as far as you think you're ever likely to, **Colin Henderson** from **Glasgow** has a new method for adding a bit of extra challenge to the game. Instead of lining up a normal shot, try it in reverse. There's an invisible wall to the left that will rebound the bag back into play if you hit it with enough force. So face the wrong way, soften up the sandbag, and **see how far you can hit it off the invisible wall**.

DISTANCE 300m 250m 200m

GAME ON!

"See how many floors you can complete in five minutes"

ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER





SAVAGE CHALLENGE

You'll need the Hookshot or Deku Leaf, the Power Bracelets and a friend with a stopwatch for this challenge, which comes from **James Downing** in **Sheffield**. It's simple enough. Go to the Savage Labyrinth area on Outset Island, and head inside. As soon as you drop through the first hole, start the timer and get to work with that sword. **See how many floors you can complete in five minutes**, which is plenty of time to build up a good killing rhythm. Count the number of holes you drop through, and award yourself the appropriate medal.

HOLES  **15**  **12**  **8**

ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER





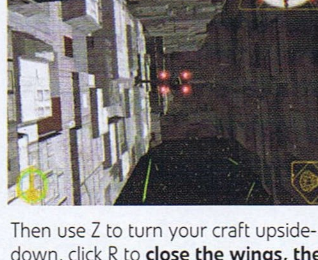
GO GULL

This spot of fun with seagulls comes courtesy of **George Maddocks** from **London**. You'll need to be in a well-populated area to try it, so sail over to Windfall Island. You'll also need a supply of Hyoi pears from the merchant ship. Stand at the end of the pier, get Link to stick the pear on his head, and **see how many people you can hit** using the seagull. You've got a 15-second time limit, and you can't hit the same person twice. George says the route up the main street, over the rooftops and onto the grassy area is the quickest and most productive.

HITS  **10** **9** **8**

ROGUE LEADER





AEROBATICS

No doubt you're itching to get hold of *Rogue Squadron III* right now, but for now you could always pass the time by perfecting your skills with *Rogue Leader*. Luckily for those of us who have long since finished that game, **William Horton** from **Aylesbury** has devised a simple-yet-challenging test of any X-Wing pilot's ability. Choose the first mission and get to the Death Star trench run sequence with three lives remaining.

Then use Z to turn your craft upside-down, click R to **close the wings, then dash through to the end**, pausing only to shoot down the required TIEs.



LIVES LEFT **3** **2** **1**

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE

HOT POTATO

Need a two-player *Smash Bros* challenge? **Jake Griggs** from **somewhere in Basingstoke** came up with this little beauty, using only a Pokéball and a large, flattish arena such as Zelda's castle or Fox's ship. Turn off all other items and start a five-minute game. Stand a little way from the other player, grab a ball, and play catch. The other player must **catch and return the Pokéball**. If the ball is dropped, the offending player must stand and take the consequences. Tot up how many times you dropped one during the match.

DROPS  **5**  **10**  **15**



SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE





BEACH COMBER

This *Mario Sunshine* challenge is the work of **Lee Still** from **Uxbridge**. Go to Gelato Beach's watermelon festival Shine, where you'll find the beach riddled with what Lee calls "red beaky things". There are a total of 14 wandering around the area where you start, and the object of the challenge is to **round up as many red beaky things as possible** without getting flipped. The trick is to match the beaky thing's pace, staying just far enough ahead to avoid getting flipped. After a spot of careful jogging, Mario will have a whole herd of the things waddling after him. Count 'em up for medal purposes.

THINGS  14  10 6

ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER





TEASING SWINE

Messing with the pigs isn't the safest thing Link can do – especially if we're talking about that elf-eating Hannibal pig on Outset Island. Fortunately, the porkers over on Windfall are a tad more manageable, and **Alexander Harrison** from **Camberley** has dreamed up this pig-racing challenge. First, hack a pig until it's enraged enough to chase you. Then **lead it through town** as many times as you can. Go through the main entrance, up the hill and all the way through the town, weaving through the pedestrians. The more pigs you get following you, the more kudos you earn.

LAPS  6  4 2

NGC CHALLENGES WANTED

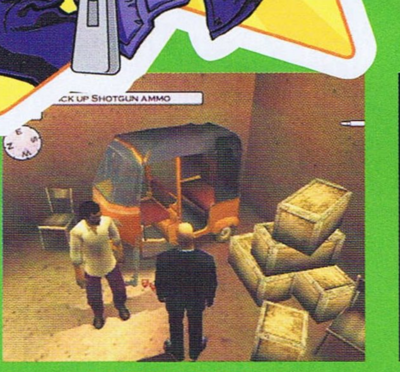


NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Have you discovered a weird and wonderful new way to play Nintendo games? Can you sum it all up in about 100 words? If you have a challenge you'd like to share with other NGC readers, then we want to hear about it. Jot down a quick explanation of what you've got to do on a piece of paper, set three suitable levels of achievement for gold, silver and bronze medals, stick it in an envelope, and send it to…

GAME ON, NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW
Or email ngc@futurenet.co.uk, with Game On as the subject line.

We'll take challenges for absolutely any game, but this month we're particularly interested in…



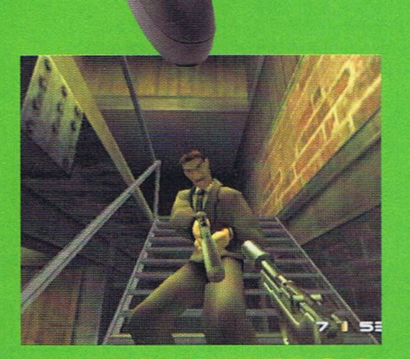
HITMAN 2



IKARUGA



WARIO WORLD



TIMESPLITTERS 2

THE BEST GET PRINTED RIGHT HERE, AND OUR FAVOURITE CHALLENGE WILL WIN A SHINY NEW GAMECUBE GAME. DEAL?

30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW

MAILBOX

STAR LETTER

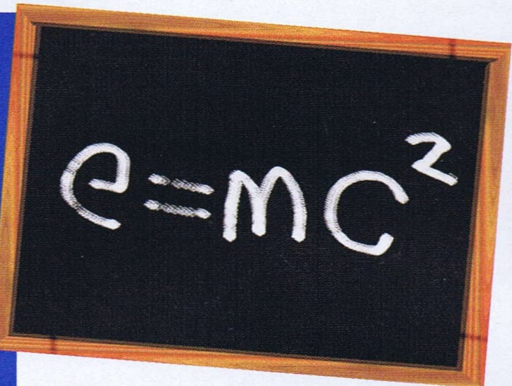
The winner of the Star Letter receives a bundle of gaming gear courtesy of Joytech, incorporating two Advanced Controllers, a gold-plated RGB Scart cable, an 8Mb memory card and a GC/GBA link cable. Mint!

'Dough off'

Nintendo seem to be forgetting they have two active consoles. Either they've been caught up in the pointless console wars, or they think that as the GBA has no competition they can do a half-arsed job on it. Hasn't the GBA been out for two years? Then why haven't three of Nintendo's most popular franchises (*Donkey Kong*, *Zelda* and *Mario*) had a new game on the platform? I was already unhappy about this, but then I heard they are re-releasing a re-release of *Donkey Kong Country*, which got me really narked off. This is well below the capabilities of the GBA. It was released on the GB Color! It isn't just Nintendo that is doing this, and I predict that once the appeal of retro games wears off, companies are going to have to think of a different strategy to con people's hard-earned dough off them. Games companies, listen to this – more retro games within new games, less lazy cash-ins please.
Neil Clark, Bournemouth

***While I'm in favour of giving new players the chance to experience classic games on modern hardware, Nintendo's no-brainer strategy of re-releases and updates can wear thin at times. GBA was supposed to be the ultimate 2D platform, but where is the new* Mario *game? The next instalment of* Zelda*? Nobody outside of Nintendo can make these sorts of games properly, and it's a shame that the SNES legacy seems to be stifling the company's creativity.* Ed**





'Force you fools'

In issue 81's letter entitled 'This isn't possible', Mark Nisbet said that games may or may not be 4D in the future. He says that 4D includes time. But to put it simply, this is absolute bull. There are only three dimensions – length, width and depth. Time is not a dimension, only a force you fools.
'Johnny Total', via email

***No, it's definitely a dimension. Stephen Hawking says so – and he's half-robot.* Ed**

'Obviously not'

I do believe *Ocarina of Time* is at least slightly 4D, as it includes time travel. But obviously not real time, as you travel back and forth in just moments.
James Coxon, Barnstaple

***Anyone care to take this further? No? Good.* Ed**

'Boring issue'

I have to say I don't think that the best letter always gets the prize. I mean, it seems that the Star Letter goes to the people who basically repeat the points that you have made in previous magazines. Of course, this is not always the case. But in issue 81 I thought that Stuart Watkinson was making much more of an interesting point than the winner David Mitchell, who was just on about the fairly boring issue of the price of Gamecubes. I was just wondering which of you decides who deserves the Star Letter. Surely it's just opinion.
Tom Bell, Derby

***You see, it's all done with a giant electronic brain built from old NES consoles and Mario bubble bath containers. Having sucked your own letter into its gaping information port, the brain said: "He was great as Jack the Hat, but he hasn't had a decent role in years. Star Letter denied. Blork."* Ed**

'Week is short'

Great. Another disappointment from Nintendo. What am I talking about? *The Wind Waker*, of course. After finishing it in under a week, I can safely say that it was a huge disappointment. Only five mind-numbingly easy dungeons. The puzzles are uninventive and reused; nowhere did I see any of the originality and ingenuity of *Ocarina of Time*'s masterful dungeons. The cel-shading – although certainly one of the most impressive feats of graphical gaming ever achieved – does not suit *Zelda*. Yes, the 'Nintendo Difference' is still there, but if it's only different for a few days and then you reach the end, it's hardly worth it. I don't like short games. A week is short. Far too short. The quality of Nintendo's first-party games is slowly dropping. Yes, they're still the best out there, but not as good as they used to be, and maybe not for long. And don't even get me started on *Mario Sunshine*. After finishing *Wind Waker*, I put in my bonus disc, started up *OOT*, and was overwhelmed by the feeling that this game was so much better than *Wind Waker*. It takes ages to finish, even for about the fifteenth attempt (in my case).
A 'hardcore' Nintendo fan, via email

***Well, if they had spent the time to make* Wind Waker *as big and original as* Ocarina*, you wouldn't have finished it in under a week. In fact you wouldn't have played it at all, because you'd still be sitting there waiting for a vague 2005-ish release date. Anyway, I don't think* Wind Waker *is that short. You can blast through the main adventure fairly easily, but if you have the time and inclination to take on the side-quests, it's more like a Mario-style explorathon with as much to do as you can be bothered to seek out. It's a fine balance, but I'd say this time Nintendo got it right. The company's accountants would certainly agree. How about other readers?* Ed**

Bonus Letters

So there you have it. Morph and videogames are more alike than first meets the eye.
Emily and Sarah, North Yorks
***True.* Ed**

Metroid Prime itself has raised the 'bench' with regards to the fps genre. Where everyone thought it was dead, Nintendo come along and rewrite the rulebook much to the amazement and detriment of the gaming community.
Vinny Patel, Solihull
***Sounds interesting, but that makes next to no sense in English.* Ed**

Of course my son and I indulged ourselves last weekend.
R Kuipers, Holland
***And in less permissive countries you'd be writing this on prison notepaper now.* Ed**

I'd like to say thanks for guiding me through the crap to the shiny nuggets of genius.
A Scott, Bath
***All part of the service.* Ed**

So far I've put my sword to good use about five times.
Mark Johnson, via email
***Congratulations!* Ed**

EMAIL US!

Got something to say? Run out of stamps? Guards won't let you near a pen? Then log on to the interweb and 'get' us 'at'...
ngc@futurenet.co.uk
...right now! And please include your *name and address*. Oh, go on. Please.



HONOURABLE MENTIONS
Thanks to everyone else who wrote in, including (but not limited to): Dan Hainey, Bristol; James Hodge, Preston; Elliott Richards, Exeter; Christopher George, Perthshire; Peter James, Hereford; Dean Hailstone, Jarrow; Elliott Richards, Exeter; Tom Knoll, Basingstoke; Jack Harrison, Surrey; Lewis Coomber, Kent; Andrew Lea, Blackpool; Chris Wilson, Lewes; Ben Socrates, Barnstaple; Joel Featherstone, Nottingham; Nick Dearing, Nottingham; Michael Lunt, Falmouth; Gabe Harry, via email; Andrew Ryan, Abu Dhabi (the cheese was an accident that turned into an in-joke); Andreas Røren Strand, Norway; Matthew Fellows, Andover; Tiffanie Zheng, via email; Gareth

Zelda good, Zelda bad, and a sneaky spot of online karting.



△ The Rink, in one of his pixellated incarnations.

'Excellent debut'

I've enjoyed the Zelda series of games since the epic *Link to the Past* on the SNES, but I think that *Wind Waker* is by far the best of the series so far – and yes, I do mean better than *Ocarina of Time*. The fresh, vividly coloured and vibrant environments in *Wind Waker* are much better suited to a Zelda game, and a natural move from the excellent top-down graphics in *Link to the Past*.

And, apart from the graphics, the gameplay in *Wind Waker* is superb. So much to do, so many excellent side-quests, offshoots of stories, puzzles and secrets to uncover that I sometimes forget I'm supposed to be playing the main quest. Never has a *Zelda* world felt so alive, involving, and full of superb characters.

My only regret is that I know the game is going to have to finish at some point, and I just know that every other game I play from now on (until a new *Zelda, Mario* or *Metroid* appears) will seem extremely dull compared to *Zelda*'s excellent debut on the Gamecube.

Paul Harries, Aberystwyth

***Games like* Wind Waker *are the reason we're so ridiculously devoted to a Japanese company that often seems unaware Europe even exists. Everybody needs a bit of Rinkydink in their life.* Ed**

Bonus Letters

I could almost feel the weight of a shield on my back because it felt so cool.
C McMillan, Glasgow
***That was no shield. It was Geraint.* Ed**

Please draw a giant Enjiki crushing people in different ways, it would be really nice. Even if you don't put it in your magazine will you please send me the picture?
James McNaughton, via email
***Pervert.* Ed**

Imagine being able to walk through any council estate or secondary school in the country and be surrounded by the likes of Liz Hurley. Is this what life is like for you?
Emily Bull, Darlington
***All hail the power of Tramp Juice.* Ed**

There is no difference…
Yes, hold on there is.
T Holzer, Newbridge
***Or is there?* Ed**

Can't wait to see how *Viewtiful Joe, Killer 7* and *XIII* will play, though I have a feeling that probably all three of them will be turn out to range from light to huge disappointments.
James D, via email
***That's the spirit.* Ed**

I'm 13 and still wet the bed.
Alex Godfrey, Stockport
***My work here is done.* Ed**

'Make them so hard'

Why oh why should bosses in games be so damn difficult? I've been playing *Zelda* for a good three weeks, and I have to say it is one of the most brilliantly imaginative games I have ever played. On reaching the first boss I couldn't believe how amazing it looked, and I have to say, although it was very easy, it was still far more enjoyable than spending hours on a rock-solid boss on, say, *Resident Evil*. Why should developers make what should be the most memorable moments in a game so hard that you simply don't want to play it? I would much rather whizz through an easy game like *Zelda* in a week than spend months getting annoyed at one boss. Do they make them so hard just to keep you playing?

Jeffrey Davis, via email

***Sounds like the old 'Nintendo Difference' again. Knocking a cartoon dragon onto the head of a giant lava monster is always going to be more fun than chasing an overgrown snake around a bookcase. Speaking of evil bosses, did you see the last boss in* Jet Force Gemini*? I still have nightmares about that one.* Ed**

'Green tights'

I have to confess, when I first heard about *Wind Waker* I was both excited and cynical. But the moment I was free to run around Outset Island, I was hooked. Once Ganon made his appearance, I was hurling abuse at the screen. My poor TV has still not recovered.

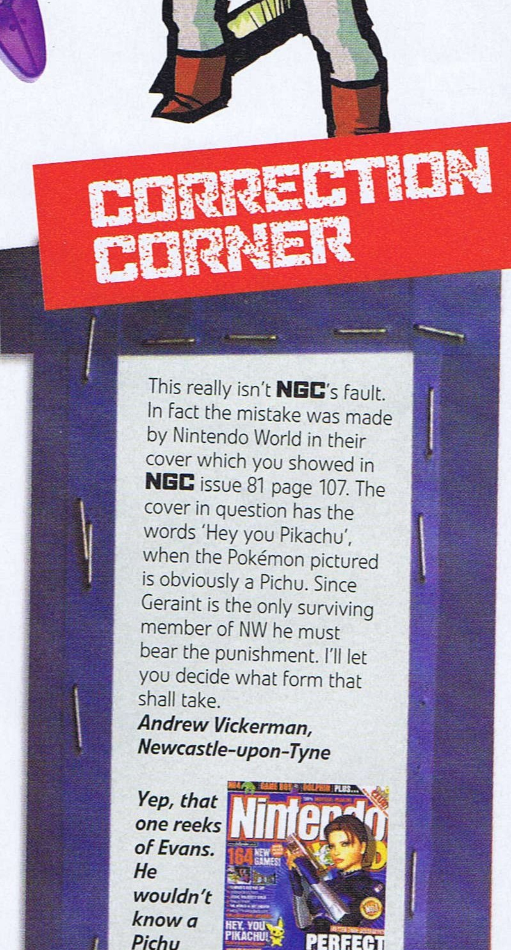
As I played, I became so engrossed in the game I didn't really notice the cel-shaded visuals, except on the many occasions when they convey everything so beautifully – especially when Master Rinkydink walks along a ledge. I was amazed at how the game was so instantly enthralling, and how the visuals fit perfectly, without being patronising or giving the game a childlike feel. Quite simply, this game rules.

I have only one gripe: why will *Master Quest* only play on a 60Hz TV? Inexplicably, I don't have a 60Hz TV in my house. I know this disc is only a free gift, but *Wind Waker* has reawakened my love of all things elven and, in green tights, I wanted to reacquaint myself with *Ocarina of Time* – especially the wonderfully haunting Nocturne of Shadow. Ho hum. I leave you now, as I toddle off to reinstate my faithful N64.

Alison Wilson, via email

***The 60Hz* Master Quest *thing is quite clearly a cost-cutting measure, as it saves the minimal expense of adding a normal PAL mode to it. We should probably be grateful to have received the bonus disc in this country at all, but everyone here prefers* Ocarina *in its natural N64 state anyway.* Ed**

CORRECTION CORNER



This really isn't **NGC**'s fault. In fact the mistake was made by Nintendo World in their cover which you showed in **NGC** issue 81 page 107. The cover in question has the words 'Hey you Pikachu', when the Pokémon pictured is obviously a Pichu. Since Geraint is the only surviving member of NW he must bear the punishment. I'll let you decide what form that shall take.

Andrew Vickerman, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

***Yep, that one reeks of Evans. He wouldn't know a Pichu from a punch in the eye – a fact for which I have recently obtained knuckle-skinning proof. I have also posted his address at the night shelters and clinics where other ex-Nintendo World employees can be found, so they can congratulate him in person for costing them their jobs.* Ed**

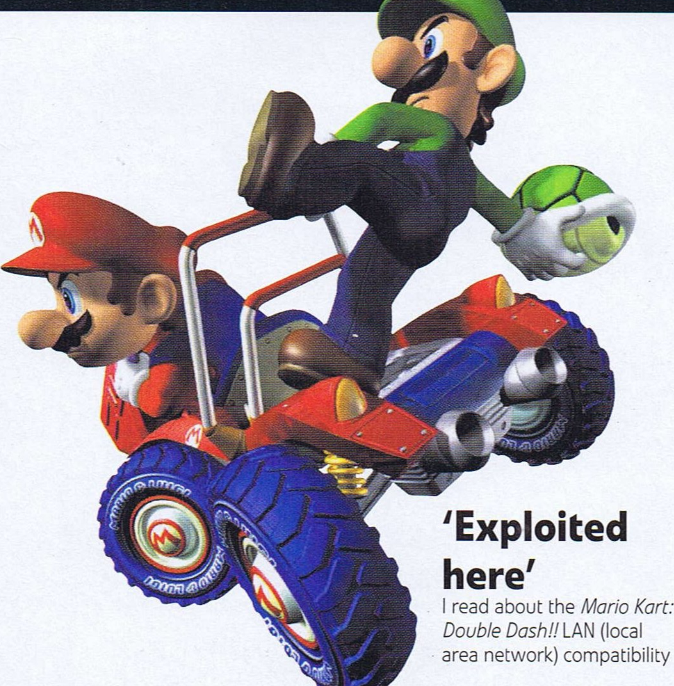
Murphy, via email; Mike Kalinski, Abbey Wood; Kalle Koskinen, Finland; John Coxon, Peterborough; Sam Rees, Bristol; Stuart Wybrow, via email; Dirk De Koker, Belgium; Ben Winstanley, Sale; Scott McNab, Bishopton; Peter Jinks, Rainham; Sam Glover, Godalming; Jack Taylor, Driffield; Blaine Thompson, Perth; Sam Baker, via email; Richard Fitzgerald, Birmingham; Stephen Arthur, Newcastle; Ross Fleming, Duns; Thomas Hayes, Manchester; Martin Burn, Co Durham; Euan Kennedy, Kelvedon; Mark Nisbet, Galston; Bob Lemmington, via email; Seb Roberts, London; Daniel Todesco, via email; Tobi Roberts, London; Bjørn Silas Dvergastein, Norway; Adam Cafolla, via email; and hundreds of others. We love reading your letters, folks.

Grintendo!

SEND US YOUR JOKES, AND WE'LL TEST THEM ON THE LOVELY ENJIKI. IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT YOU MAKE HER SMILE, WE'LL SEND YOU A FREE GAME. OKAY?
THIS MONTH: JOKE SUPPLIED BY MARK ROWLEY



WRITE TO... GRINTENDO/MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW/OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK



'Exploited here'

I read about the *Mario Kart: Double Dash!!* LAN (local area network) compatibility with much interest. Allow me to elaborate. Before Xbox Live was officially launched, Gamespy made available to download a program called Xbox Portal which emulated the Xbox system link. You could then choose a LAN game and, with your Xbox connected to your PC, you were able to play online games through the portal software. I can't see any reason why the same situation couldn't be exploited here. So I guess I will see you online.
Calum Stevenson, Stoneyburn

You're dead right, and I'm sure some smart hacker will figure it out soon enough. Of course if it's that easy, it makes you wonder why Nintendo doesn't go ahead and include a simple broadband-only online option in the game. As I understand it, if you want to take advantage of the Gamecube LAN link-up option, you'll need a broadband adaptor (at £35 each) in every console. Ouch. Ed



'Buy my sister'

My mum asked me to buy my sister a copy of The Beano comic, which I did. On my way home I had a peek at it, and to my surprise saw Link staring at me from the back cover. Surely this must be a good sign that Nintendo are advertising, as I also saw a TV advert for *Wind Waker* a few days ago.
Aidan Duffy, via email

The Beano? For your sister, you say? There's no way Sony's marketing men can compete with that. Ed

'Pram-faced'

It's come to my rather weird attention that the new incarnation of Zelda looks rather like the 'pram-faced council estate girl' you referred to in issues 80 and 81, only dressed up in fantasy finery and drawn in a cartoon-esqe style. My reasoning for this is that she looks like a whole load of slappers who live round my way, near Thamesmead council estate. What do you think?
Mike Kalinski, near Thamesmead council estate

We found Zelda hanging around outside McDonalds and asked for her comments, but she was too busy screaming at the contents of her double buggy to talk to us. Ed

'Lie to me'

In issue 81's Virtual Reality page, I noticed something slightly odd sticking out of the break in Geraint's leg. Umm…what is it? Please lie to me, as I know full well what it looks like, and I'm more than a bit worried.
Mike Brett, Worthington

It's just a thigh bone – nothing serious. It sort of popped out when we all jumped on Geraint's leg before the picture was taken. Ed

SO TELL ME THIS...

Thinks, Knows and Learns, secreted like so much precious brainsweat.

1. Any date for *Colin McRae 3* yet? Or even a rough guess?
2. Would I need a PC for *Phantasy Star Online*?
3. Is there really only one fatality per character on *MK: Deadly Alliance*?
4. Why does my girlfriend not share my enthusiasm for videogames?
5. Does GC support 5.1 surround, or is this possible in any other way, as I notice in your reviews Info Burst, it sometimes specifies surround sound?
Dan Nicholls, Stevenage

1. Judging by the deafening silence coming from Codemasters, I'd say don't hold your breath.
2. You'll need one to set up a free internet account before registering your game.
3. Yes. Only one.
4. Barbie warped her mind as a youngster. Maybe you should trade her in for a better one.
5. Yes, via Dolby Pro Logic II. Just plug the two audio leads into a compatible surround sound amp and you're away.

1. Any chance of *Streets of Rage* on GBA?
2. I have a *Mario Sunshine* save on the same memory card as *Smash Bros*. How do I get my extra trophy?
3. Doesn't Enjiki look a bit too much like the new re-designed Jo Dark for the Xbox?
4. Is *Resi 4* really in full 3D?
5. How come you gave *Legends of Wrestling* such a cruddy mark in comparison to the dreadful *Wrestlemania X8* when it's far superior?
Scott Broadfoot, Glasgow

1. No plans at the moment.
2. There's no Mario Sunshine bonus trophy.
3. No. Jo Dark is a ginger.
4. Certainly is.
5. It isn't superior. It's crap.

1. If I buy a GBA SP in the US, will I need a new lead to charge it in this country?
2. Does an Action Replay work with all NTSC games?
3. When's *Donkey Kong* out on GBA?
"Menhinick", via email

1. Either that or a step-down converter.
2. Should do.
3. It's out now.

Are there any plans to continue making *Donkey Kong Racing* without the help of Rare?
Robert Tromans, West Midlands

No. That one's dead.

Is there any way that the Gamecube can connect to a wireless network via the ethernet? (You see I want to play *PSO*, but my dad doesn't want wires all around the house, so the above is the only way – unfortunately).
Lewis Miller, via email

You're always going to have wires around, even if you plug the Gamecube into a wireless broadband hub. Just promise that you'll tidy them up, okay?

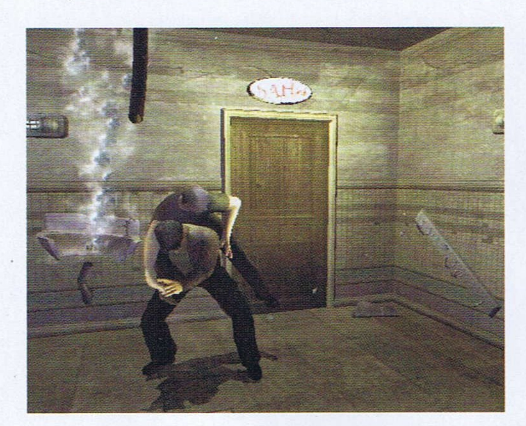
You think that was good? Just wait till next month...












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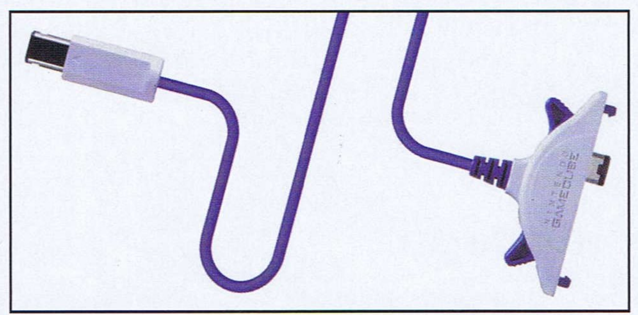
CONNECTED!

Is Cube-to-GBA connectivity really the future of gaming, or just a load of old cobblers to excuse Nintendo's reluctance to get online? We look at what's out, what's coming and if it's any good... by **Tim Weaver**

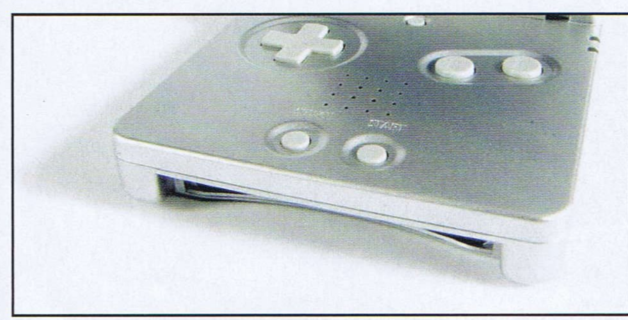


LEADS UNITED

New to connectivity? Don't know what the frick is going on? Here's how it 'is'.



■ No lead, no play, them's the rules. This is the key to connectivity, a £9.99 lead available at all good retailers. At one end is a Gamecube-port-shaped attachment, at the other a triangle-like GBA kisser that looks like one of the robots out of classic Tom Selleck flick, Runaway. A bit.



■ Interestingly, some Gamecube games – like *Zelda* – don't actually require a copy of the GBA equivalent. So, in order to make use of *The Wind Waker*'s extra features on the 'Boy, all you need are the two machines, a link cable and a copy of Miyamoto's cel-shaded masterpiece.





■ Here's your slots. The Gamecube end can just find a home in the second controller port, so there won't be any need for controller swappage. The GBA end is a massive attachment for a tiny little hole, although it clamps on tightly to prevent mid-game cable kicking. All in all, simple stuff.



■ Finding the option in your game *can* be a bit of a pain. In games such as *Zelda* and *Metroid*, it's marked up nice and clear in the options. In others, like *Rayman*, *Splinter Cell* and *Sonic 2*, you have to go searching or, occasionally, just stumble accidentally across the connectivity feature.

When you take the plunge and side with Nintendo, you can be certain of a few things: one, their games are, quite simply, better than anyone else's; two, they really, genuinely don't have a clue (bless 'em) about how to market their products to press or public; and, three, they'll do things their own way because they ostensibly believe their way is the best way. Mostly, they're right.

Connectivity is the new big idea. With the stellar success of GBA still turning up Yen signs – and lots of them – at Nintendo HQ, it makes sense to try and kickstart Gamecube's sales by tag-teaming the two machines. The result is that 70 to 80 per cent of Nintendo's games will now have a little extra something on board for owners of a GBA and Gamecube.

Others are following suit too, after Nintendo's top execs did an A to Z world tour of games publishers to talk up the possibilities of connectivity. EA, Konami, Sega, Ubi Soft, Square, Natsume and Treasure are all on board, as are Nintendo second-party Silicon Knights, who recently talked-up the possibility of *Metal Gear* cross-pollination.

Question is, is it going to be a system-shifter? And, probably more importantly, is it really any cop? Well, we've gone and found out. And the results, as you'll see, are interesting…

"70 TO 80 PER CENT OF NINTENDO'S TITLES WILL NOW HAVE A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA FOR GAMERS"

TING WHEN YOU'RE WINNING

So, what has Tingle ever done for Link?





BOMBS

When enemies attack Link, you can manoeuvre Tingle's green icon over them and select a bomb here. Once done, press B and the jovial fairy does a job on Link's beastly foes.



SHIELD

Select this option and, when Link finds himself overrun, Tingle can chuck a shield into the mixer. Link'll be surrounded by green fire and impervious to enemy swordage.



SURPRISE

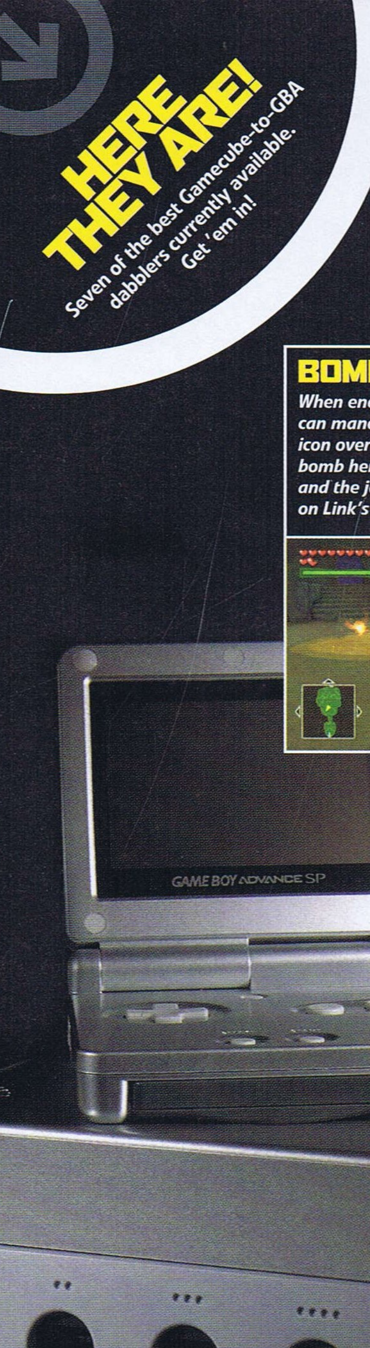
This is a bit like doing the Lotto – you don't know what you're going to get, but inevitably you'll be disappointed. For that random effect, choose this option and Tingle decides what to throw our hero's way.



WALKING ON AIR

Our favourite, this. When you come across seemingly uncrossable pits of fire, go for this balloon to instigate a three-second period where Link can walk on air. Most useful when digging out secret sections.





THE LEGEND THE WIND

Nintendo lead the way again with truly groundbreaking connectivity…

Groundbreaking, you say?
Yup. While there's certainly some impressive connectivity coming out of companies such as Ubi Soft, a lot of coders still see the GBA and Cube as two entirely separate entities – do something on one to unlock something else in the other. Nintendo, on the other hand, have given us a glimpse of what connectivity is *truly* about with the Tingle Tuner option in the *The Wind Waker*.

Yes. But what's so special about it, then?
First off, you don't even need a copy of *Zelda* for the GBA – simply connect your handheld to your Cube. Immediately, *The Wind Waker* will recognise the 'Boy, and if you go to the Items screen, you should have a 'Tingle Tuner', provided you've rescued Tingle from his cell on Windfall Island. (*Most people know it as a GBA with a picture of Tingle on it, but still… – Ed*) Assign the Tuner to an item button, and, providing you're in an area where Tingle comes out to play, you'll access a map and series of Link-protecting options on your handheld.

> **"THE STUPID-FACED FAIRY HAS HIS OWN ITEM SCREEN, WITH BOMBS, SHIELDS AND MORE"**



Okay. But what do you mean 'an area where Tingle comes out to play'?
Some areas of *The Wind Waker* Tingle doesn't recognise – or, at least, won't make available his full arsenal of options for. If you use the Tingle Tuner in one of these areas, a map will be the only thing uploaded to your GBA – though, handily, it *is* a map of a size Link can't otherwise get on his tod.

And if it *is* an area Tingle, er, 'comes out to play' in?
Then that's where it gets good. In a dungeon, by pressing L and using the D-pad on your GBA, you can get complete dungeon layouts, even if Link doesn't have the dungeon map on the Gamecube. Even better, you can double-team Tingle and Link. See, the stupid-faced fairy has an item screen of his own



△ Do you? DO YOU? Er, well, yes, we do.


△ Tingle dispatches enemies with ease.



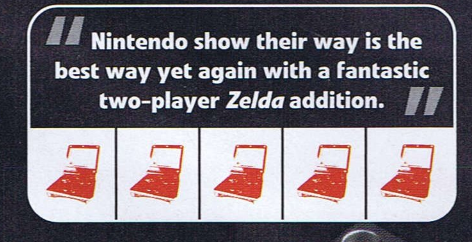
△ To roll out the red-faced bomb-thrower, simply select this option in Link's inventory.

OF ZELDA WAKER

featuring bombs, shields and the like. When you access Tingle on the Gamecube, a green four-pointed marker will be visible. You can move it around in *The Wind Waker* using the GBA, and when Link gets attacked by enemies, you can help him out by dropping a couple of bombs.

Eh? So… Tingle on the GBA protects Link on the Gamecube – in real time?
Correct! It's actually very clever. If, as Link, you're running low on health, it's a perfect way to negotiate your way through dungeons without endangering those all-important hearts.

Surely you can't control both of them at the same time?
No, you definitely can't. We've tried. The connectivity in *Zelda* is meant for one thing: to create a two-player experience. One of you controls Link in *The Wind Waker*, and the other controls Tingle on the GBA in, er, *The Wind Waker*. If you get our meaning. It's really quite ingenious, you know.



> **Nintendo show their way is the best way yet again with a fantastic two-player *Zelda* addition.**



△ Follow the simple on-screen instructions to secure yourself a spot of retro-wick NES '*Troid*.

METROID PRIME

A 'retro surprise' – in more ways than one… Mwahahahaha! Yawn.



Go on then – surprise me. How can this game *possibly* get better?
Well, you're going to need *Metroid Prime* and *Fusion* on the GBA to make the most of it. And not only that, you'll also need to have completed them both to unlock the total package.

Total package, eh? What do you mean by that, then?
This is important, so we'll say it again: *you have to have completed* Prime *and* Fusion *to get all the extras.* Now plug 'em together and you open up the original NES *Metroid* and a new costume for Samus – the blue organic one from *Metroid Fusion*, no less.

And you can download the NES *Metroid* to your GBA?
Er, no. Unlike *Animal Crossing* which, you may recall, allows you to download some of its old NES games to your handheld, *Metroid* NES stays put on the Gamecube, with your memory card acting as your save point. Still, at least you'll have a big TV to really appreciate those 'graphics'.

Looks rough as hell in the shots.
Certainly does. But it's a classic 8-bit outing you should have played if you haven't already, and, blasting your way through it, you can see where some of the ideas in *Metroid Prime* came from.

What about the costume?
There's no big change between the *Prime* and *Fusion* costumes, other than the change in colour and the fact that Samus has ditched the Dynasty shoulder pads.




△ Here it is, then, in all its glory. Sure, it looks like absolute turd, but *you get the whole frickin' game.*



△ If you want to deal yourself in with Samus' hip blue suit, you'll have to complete *Fusion*.

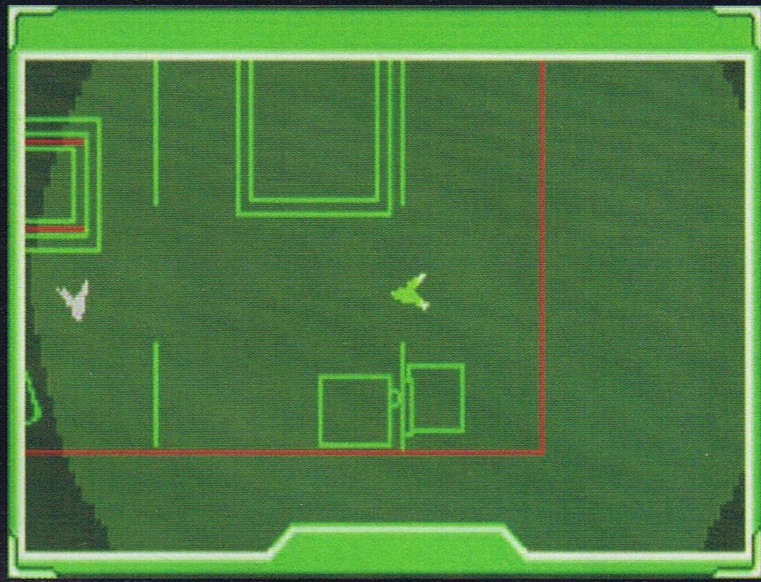


△ Look at her! Get her into a ball to clear the area.

> **Not as discerning as other GC/GBAers, but you can't whack the inclusion of an entire NES game.**

CONNECTED!

"All you need is a link cable and your racing skills"



△ The updated version of the OPSAT makes things interesting in The Cell. VERY interesting.

RAYMAN 3 HOODLUM HAVOC

Never mind the no-limbed loser, feel that French quality…



Nothing you say will persuade me to play a Rayman game. Not ever.
You should consider, erm, re-considering, then, because *Rayman*'s connectivity is fantastic. Go deep into the surprisingly good *Hoodlum Havoc* to unlock its extras: a two-player mode, a four-player split-screen mode and, perhaps best of all, Mad Trax, a hatter-mad shoe-racing game.

***Shoe* racing?**
Yeah, it's crazily French, but it's really, genuinely good. Here's how it works: one of you sticks to the Gamecube, and the other gets down to business on the GBA. On the Gamecube, you're taking the shoe for a spin, and on the GBA you're laying the track for the shoe – *as it races.*

As it races?
Yeah. By fitting *Tetris*-style shapes together on the GBA, you create the track the shoe – on the Gamecube – is racing. Don't lay pieces quick enough, and the shoe goes bye-bye into the swirly blue netheryonder below the course. Fortunately, the shoe does have some form of brake, but in applying the brakes you risk wasting precious seconds in an already time-sensitive game.

Is there no way of adding on time?
Of course! There are pick-ups which hand you extra seconds, but there's also an added worry for the GBA player because they've not only got to feed you the track, they've also got to avoid asteroids in the way. If a piece of track hits an asteroid, it disappears and you have to wait for the next load of track to wander its way out. Not great when your shoe is belting along at three figures looking for the next length of course to appear in front of it.

Do you need a copy of *Rayman 3* on the old Advance?
Do you 'eck! All you need is a link-up cable, and then the rest's down to your racing skills. Plug it all together, and the game does all the hard work for you.

"Sure, it's racing in a shoe, but this is a genuinely brilliant use of connectivity. Nicely!"








HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

The only way to see *all* of Hogwarts!



So, what's the deal?
The 'deal' is, you'll need both versions of *The Chamber of Secrets* – Gamecube and GBA – to fully appreciate what that link cable accesses, although you *can* access a simple slide puzzle, which downloads from the Cube to your GBA without the need for a copy of the GBA game.

Let's say we've got copies of both.
Well, that's where it gets quite clever. First up, on connection, a secret area is accessed in the GBA game, within the grounds of Hogwarts. If you've grabbed four location Wizard cards from the bean challenges, then you'll be laughing all the way to the bank, because within the newly opened secret area is the fifth card which, when collected, opens up a secret level in the Gamecube version. This one is set within the confines of Hogwarts castle and, essentially, means that in order to complete 100 per cent of both games, you actually need to make use of connectivity. Canny.

"An inspired idea, that gives you a genuine reason to own and play both *Harry Potters*."







SONIC ADVENTURE 2

Increasingly annoying game goes all Tamagotchi on itself…



Tamagotchi, eh?
Yup. Here's how *Sonic*'s interactivity works: collect a Chao in-game in Gamecube Sonic and you can either download it (using the Chao Garden) to your GBA and 'grow' it in a basic environment, or you can pop in a copy of *Sonic Advance* and pootle around in a specially created garden area.

Doing what exactly?
Mostly picking up crud and ensuring your Chao is happy. You can use those famous Sonic rings to buy stuff, like fruit and toys, but you also have to keep the garden neat and tidy, ie free from weeds. The nicer you keep your patch, the more content your Chao is.

But can't you do all this in the Gamecube Chao Garden?
Some of it, yes, but not all of it. The advantage the GBA Chao Garden gives you is that there are certain items that are accessible which are unavailable on the Gamecube. Exciting, eh?

Not really.
Quite.

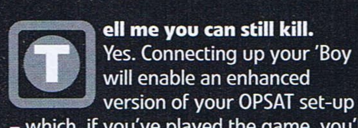
"Interesting, but ultimately dull, interaction between *Sonic* on Gamecube and Advance."





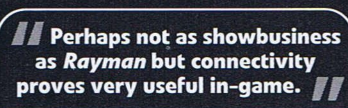

SPLINTER CELL

Map your way to a human heart...



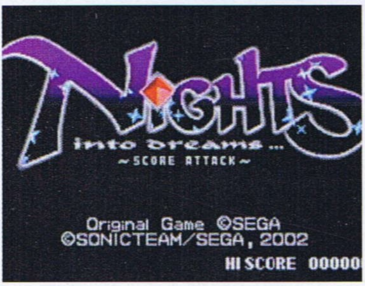
Tell me you can still kill.
Yes. Connecting up your 'Boy will enable an enhanced version of your OPSAT set-up – which, if you've played the game, you'll know is how you get around the levels and kill nice and silent.

What do you mean 'enhanced'?
You can get access to your OPSAT map. Via the GBA, you can see dead bodies, enemies, knocked out enemies and more – you'll even get a warning beep when baddies appear. Plus, you'll get access to the brilliant Gamecube-exclusive Sticky Bombs, which can be plonked onto walls or, hilariously, guards, and detonated remotely via the GBA. You can also use the OPSAT to briefly scope ahead for extra intelligence. This is especially neat: you now have a kind of remote control where you can open elevators and log into computers from the comfort of the shadows. The rest of the time, remember, you're at risk of being seen while, say, merely waiting for the blinkin' elevator. So it's pretty handy.



"Perhaps not as showbusiness as *Rayman* but connectivity proves very useful in-game."



▲ It's *Nights*! One of the top five reasons for owning a Saturn – on your Gamecube!



▲ Yeah, bet you did, you dirty little... Now you know how Geraint became a dad. Idiot.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

Daisy-chain your GBA to the interweb to live out your phantasy...

Free games you say? For my GBA? Mmmm...
Well, we wouldn't say *free*, exactly. If you want them you're going to have to fork out for an internet service provider, a copy of *Phantasy Star Online* and a Hunter's Licence to play the game online – which is the only way to get the GBA games.

So come on then, how do I get them?
Well, like we said, you'll need to get them from completing the quests in the main game. Head over to the Hunter's Guild on Pioneer 2 and complete Dream Messenger to get *Nights*, and search around the Medical Center in Gallon's Shop to get *Puyo Pop*. *Chao Garden* can be found in the Fake in Yellow quest by going back down to the planet's surface rather than collecting your reward money when the quest finishes.

When you've found the games, they'll automatically save themselves to your player profile so you don't have to get them again. To play them, just link up your GBA and head over to the Pioneer Warehouse quest and download them from the GBA-shaped terminal.

So what are the games like?
Well, *Tiny Chao Garden* aside (it's just a scaled-down version of the one in *Sonic Adventure 2*) they're very good. *Puyo Pop* (a kind of *Columns*-style puzzler) is just as addictive as it ever was. Some of you may know it as *Dr Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine* from *Sonic Collection* – it mightn't have the multiplayer, but it's otherwise the same thing.

Nights Score Attack is where it's at though. It plays like a stripped-down *Nights* (which was on the Saturn), requiring you to fly through rings and collect gems against the clock. Addictive.

"You can't argue with three extra games for nowt – two of them are even half-decent"

MAKING THE CONNECTION

There's plenty else out there already, and more being added every day. Here's an idea...

OUT NOW



Animal Crossing (Import)
To date, probably the most impressive use of connectivity. You create textures on your GBA for use in-game on the Cube, there's a stack of old NES games, and the chance to earn moolah by seeking out an island only accessible when you're connected.



Crash Bandicoot: Wrath of Cortex
Whether you'd ever buy this predictable PSone export is another matter. But the GBA version of *Crash* was decent enough, and it's the developers of the handheld version, Vicarious Visions, who have created Crash Blast, a low key target-shooting game.

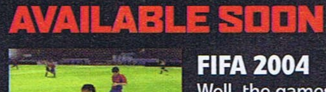


Disney Sports
Konami decided a Disney licence might be a good idea a couple of years back. Tsk. Still, at least *Basketball* and *Soccer* offered some connectivity, where the power-ups you earn in the Cube versions can be traded with your GBA. It sounds boring, but it's good-ish.



Madden NFL 2003
EA's ages-old American footie game didn't exactly go disco on the connectivity side of things, but if you've got a GBA hanging around and a copy of Madden's gridiron outing, you can access a scoreboard on your handheld that updates scores as they happen.

AVAILABLE SOON



FIFA 2004
Well, the games are gradually getting better, and EA are set to deal you in with connectivity in the next instalment of their FIFA series. No word yet on what's involved, but we reckon it'll include tactical fiddling and the opportunity to unlock secret teams.



Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles
Square's outing marks a debut for what we've affectionately termed 'ultra-connectivity': *Crystal Chronicles* requires extra players to use a GBA rather than a regular controller. It gives you a nice personal stats screen - keeps things private, see?



Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes
Silicon Knights are *definitely* going to dabble in connectivity, especially after Miyamoto and *Metal Gear* chief brain Hideo Kojima talked up the possibilities of swapping information between *Twin Snakes* and the GBA. Things are still under wraps.



Pokémon Colosseum
If you're still excited by pocket monsters, then this rendition of the N64's *Pokémon Stadium* should be right up your alley. Using *Pokémon Sapphire* or *Ruby*, you can build up your little critter on the small screen and then transfer them over to fight.



Roll-a-Rama
We're not quite sure *where* it is at the mo, but this proposed showcase for information sounds revolutionary – you can use the GBA as a controller to tilt and tumble the on-screen ball. It used to star Kirby, hence the picture of Kirby's Air Ride, here. (*Dolts – Ed.*)



The Sims
At Nintendo's pre-E3 press conference, Will Wright, creator of The Sims, was wheeled on and forced at gunpoint by Shigsy to explain that the next iteration of the franchise will offer hot character-swapping connectivity with the GBA version. Funk!



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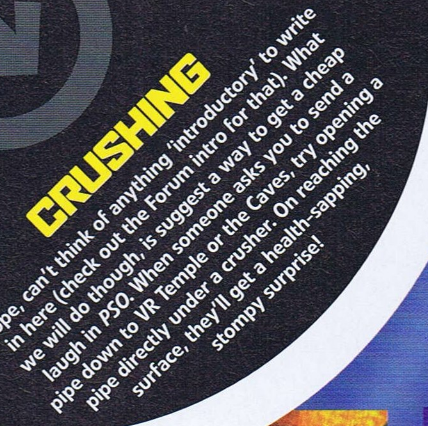
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CRUSHING

Nope, can't think of anything 'introductory' to write in here (check out the Forum intro for that). What we will do though, is suggest a way to get a cheap laugh in *PSO*. When someone asks you to send a pipe down to VR Temple or the Caves, try opening a pipe directly under a crusher. On reaching the surface, they'll get a health-sapping, stompy surprise!

PHANTASY FORUM

Exploring the inner recesses of Gamecube's life-destroying RPG…



△ You've got to admit, the Caves can be a soul-crushing exercise in abject tedium.

△ Another successful Ruins run, and another opportunity to laugh at those camp poses.

△ Is it just us, or do Photon Blasts do naff all damage?



Apparently, *PSO III* is undergoing beta trials in Japan very soon and, suffice it to say, we'll be doing our best to dig up as much info on it as we possibly can. An in-depth look, or even reports, would be a real treat because there's still a great deal of mystery about how it will actually work. In the meantime, we'd really appreciate it if you could drop us a mail to **Phantasy Forum** to let us know what you think of all this Card Battling business. Maybe it's just us, but we're warming to the idea…

CHARACTER CORRUPTION



△ Probably the only shop you ever visit. Anyone here *ever* visit the 'blue' shop? No?

It can happen to the best of us, and is always a worry to anyone who's invested time and effort into a *PSO* character – hence the amount of queries we receive about it each month. Here's a brief overview of the game's most irritating phenomenon…

WHAT IS CHARACTER CORRUPTION?

Not very pleasant, that's for sure. Character corruption is when some, or all, of the *Phantasy Star Online* system files on the memory card become corrupted, and so have to be deleted.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

There are rare instances of other things causing character corruption, but the main one is for the game to 'freeze' during a save, such as when you leave a shop menu, or join a team.

THIS MONTH'S POSTS

We could only squeeze in a few this time. But there'll be more for you next month. Promise.

CHANGING MAG EVOLUTION

Richard D, via email
Talim/LV35/RAmarl

This is for anyone out there who has a non-rare Mag and raised it fully, but isn't pleased with the outcome. Raise your Mag to Lv200 and then max out all of its stat bars. Then give it to a character of another ID, or another class. Give it a Star Atomiser. The Mag will then evolve into a different Mag depending on the order of its stats from greatest to least, the class of character feeding it and what Section ID they are. If you don't like the outcome, give it back to the character who originally fed it on its third evolution and feed it another Star Atomiser. I can't verify 100 per cent that this trick still works, but I can't see why Sega would have changed it from the previous versions of the game.

PHANTASY FORUM

More blork and a whole lot of bleep from the *PSO* community…



△ Beware of who you trade with. Their rare mega-blorks may be irreversibly corrupted.

FREEZING?

Yup. The games become unresponsive and the music judders. If it happens during a save, it has the same effect as switching off the Gamecube, or yanking out the memory card during a save. It also has the same effect as smashing the memory card into several pieces with a mallet.

WHAT CAUSES THE 'FREEZING'?

Sometimes, it just happens for absolutely no reason at all, but the chances are phenomenally low. It will happen more if you are using a Memory Card 128, and when you're in a quest. Again, the chances of this happening during a save are low. The main reason corruption happens is if you are carrying duped items.

WHAT AFFECT DOES IT HAVE ON ME?

There are three main outcomes. One: nothing. You breathe a sigh of relief, and thank the Lord for making you the jammiest sod in the world. Two: you log back on only to find you've lost every item that you haven't equipped. This is



△ Yeah, like those rares are all genuine. Um, anyone want a Mace of Adaman. Anyone?

particularly amusing if you happen to have died just before the game froze, and your spanky rare weapon hadn't been re-equipped. Three: it stalls when your game is in the middle of being saved. If this happens you're well and truly screwed. See those 138 levels of lovely power you built up? You can kiss them all goodbye.

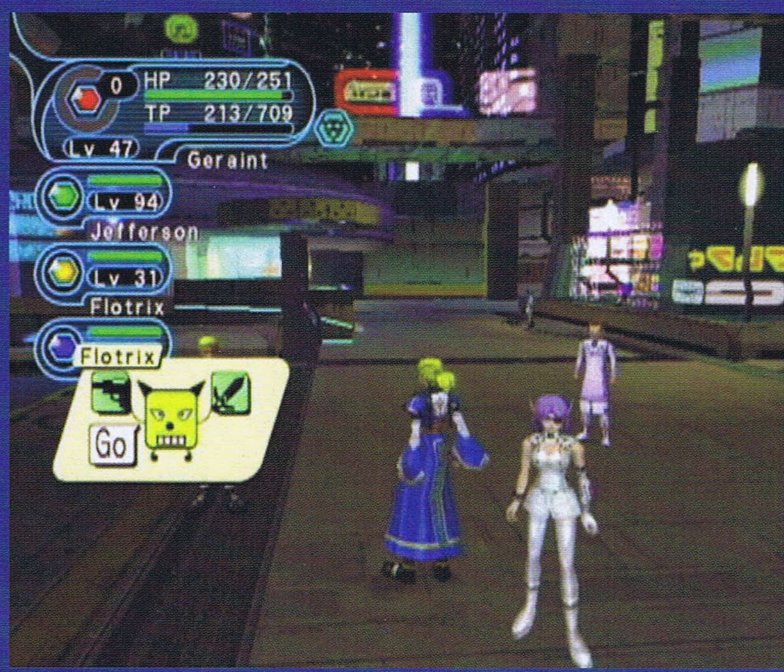
WHAT CAN I DO IF IT DOES HAPPEN TO ME?

Not a fat lot, we're afraid. It really depends on what the source of the corruption was. Sometimes, just deleting the Hunter's Guild file spares your character. But not very often.

DUPED ITEMS? WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH THEM?

Duped items are clones of items that certain users can make. And, they unhelpfully increase the rate of freezing up dramatically, because of the 'bogus data' that has been created.

The Gamecube freezes up much in the same way as the PC produces the BSOD (Blue Screen Of Death) when things go



△ One thing that really irritates us is that distance between the shops and the item deposit room. It's a real pain in the backside. Thank goodness they made it closer in Episode II.

wrong. More to the point though, what are you doing accepting dupes anyway – they ruin one of the main reasons for playing the game.

DUPED CONDITIONS?

Duped items won't ever affect the person who made the dupe. It's dupes that are received from other people that will cause your Gamecube to perform the unwelcome 'freeze' procedure. So you know, it won't affect you if the duped item is in the bank, only if it is equipped, or in your Item Pack.

HOW TO TELL IF AN ITEM IS DUPED…

To make sure you aren't the recipient of any duped items, you should ascertain a few things before you accept an item. First up, how rare is the item that you're receiving? If the item appears in the Word Select list, then it isn't that rare. But if it doesn't, and you don't know the donor really extremely well, unfortunately it's most likely that the unusual item is duped. It's a sad truth, but there are just no kind souls that give away rare treasures, such as Holy Rays, to people they barely know. Alternatively, of course, you could always just ask…

Remember, character corruption CAN happen even if you don't accept dupes, but the chances of it happening are GREATLY reduced.

Special thanks to the wonderful *Pogle* from the West Midlands for all her indispensable wisdom on this subject. Anyone who wants to drink from her (genuinely helpful) fountain of knowledge need only head towards www.ragolgazette.co.uk.



△ Not all weapons show up in the chat menus. If it doesn't, it's ultra rare.



△ The trading window is a good way to inspect any items that come your way.



△ Pogle here was snapped with the in-game camera. We'll have a guide to this soon.

RESTA ESCAPE

Adam Price, Stockport

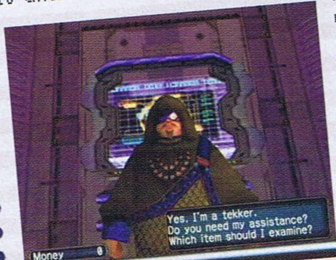
You can avoid those hard-hitting boss attacks with a well-timed Resta. This gives you a very brief window of invulnerability. If you get it right the attack will pass straight through you.



TEKKER PERCENT

Goku, email

You can get ten per cent extra on weapons that need to be Tekked if you tell the Tekker you don't accept the analysis if it's not ten per cent more than what it initially had. (We think he means you can keep doing it until you get a decent percentage - Ed). However, weapons with no percentage cannot be Tekked to get any extra percentage.



EASY WEAPON EQUIP

Parker, via email
Lv58/FOmar

If stats such as MST, ATA or POW aren't high enough to equip a weapon that you want to use, equip extra units like Arms, Legs or Mind Boosters to your armour. Your respective stats will raise (hopefully) high enough to equip the weapon. If you want to use different units afterwards you can unequip them, but you'll still be able to use the weapon you equipped. If you die, you'll have to repeat the process, unfortunately.



BOSS ANALYSIS DARK FALZ

The Ruins Run™ is one of the best sources of EXP and rare items in the game – which culminates in the Falz boss battle. Here's a brief overview of how best to dispatch him.



△ As any *PSO* player will testify, the most irritating, and hateful, thing you can do is go through the Ruins and then enter the boss battle on your own – leaving team mates outside.

THE DARVANT STORM

ENEMY HP

Normal	**50 (125 online)**
Hard	**120 (150 online)**
Very Hard	**180 (250 online)**

Irritating, but easy. The only threat comes from getting stuck between a bunch of them. Most of the Darvants can't actually be targeted, so look out for the ones with the purple glow around them, as these are the ones that you can knock out of action.

You'll need to kill a set amount before Falz will appear. Three in Normal, around seven in Hard and 12 in Very Hard should do the trick. Darvants are weak if you use Barta techniques, and Rabarta is the most effective form of attack against them. If you use it you'll kill any Darvants within range of the Force.

EXP GAINED

Normal	**5**
Hard	**5**
Very Hard	**9**



△ Incidentally, don't bother using music...



△ Gandalf's getting just a bit too personal here. We just love him as a friend.



△ He finds choosing between brie and edam a tough one to call. But edam inevitably wins.

DARK FALZ (FIRST FORM)

ENEMY HP

Normal	**2,500 (4000 online)**
Hard	**5,000 (7,500 online)**
Very Hard	**7,500 (15,000 online)**

This grounded, three-headed form is best dealt with by Hunters. As a result, any HUs in your team should concentrate on repeatedly dishing out combos and nothing else. This will allow the other characters to concentrate on support.

As usual, use Shifta Deband Zalure and Jellen to help speed up the process, while taking the edge off some of his attacks. If you get it right he proves pretty simple to beat, but there are a few attacks you'll need to watch out for.

First off, he can spit Darvants. You'll be able to tell when he's going to do this because he raises one of his heads. Use the Force in your party to Barta these away quickly, which will allow the more powerful team members to concentrate on attacking Falz himself.

His second attacks are totally unavoidable. Rabarta and Rafoi will hit everyone, so it's best to just ignore them and rely on your Force to heal any damage inflicted. The last attack – Heavens Punisher – is the one you need to be most careful of. But casting out lasers into the sky, and beaming them down to the arena floor should do 140 damage on Normal, 250 on Hard and 320 on Very Hard.



△ ...discs on bosses. By the time you get...



△ ...here the music is forcibly changed.



Oh the cheapness of it all. Still, we suppose he does dish out some lovely EXP at the end.

DARK FALZ (SECOND FORM)

ENEMY HP

Normal	**3,500 (5,000 online)**
Hard	**6,000 (9,000 online)**
Very Hard	**750 (10,000 online)**

This is the final form in Normal, and the penultimate form for all other levels. Rangers are far and away the best bet here, so, once again, leave the support to other characters. Hunters can only attack with melee weapons when Falz pauses for attack, so take a selection of multi-hitting weapons in with you. For Forces, shortcutting support techniques are a must here, as well as Grants/Barta for ranged attacks.

Again, his mass Rafoi technique is one of the main things you have to worry about here. With this in mind, get the Rangers to use their longer-range weapons so that they can spot attacks coming. At this point, move to the opposite side of the arena from the claw that is casting Rafoi. Doing this will give you a better chance of dodging the attack, which will help you keep up the momentum of fire.



You could always just stand there and clobber him.

Lastly, watch out for his stun-wave, which will slow your characters down. A quick stab with a hot-keyed Anti will help stop the effects, making dodging the Heavens Punisher (it always comes straight after) much easier.



Geraint falling, yesterday. The klutz.

DARK FALZ (FINAL FORM)

ENEMY HP

Normal	**NA**
Hard	**4,000 (8,000 online)**
Very Hard	**9,000 (13,000 online)**

If you're tackling this on your own, you'd better stock up on Scape Dolls because annihilation is inevitable – mostly because this final form's attacks are about as cheap as they come. If you're in a team, dump some Moon Atomisers on the floor at the start so you always have a means of revival.

The first of his attacks is the slash, which you can see coming because he always does it after he flies into the air. It can't really be dodged, and does minimum damage of 250 on Hard and 390 on Very Hard. So make sure that your HP is significantly higher or, for weaker characters, you use plenty of Dragon HP or DEF boosters in your armour's slots. Many of his attacks also make him impervious to damage. Forces can bypass this with techniques, and Hunters and Rangers can bypass it using the specials on their weapons.

When Falz flies up in the air, just dodge. He normally follows this up with a mass Grants attack. This does more damage than his slashing attack, so try and get some light resistance into your armour. The last serious attack is his Soul Steal. If the big dot on the radar flashes red, don't attack him – any damage you inflict will also damage you.

As a rule, Hunters with melee weapons are not much use here, because he'll be too far away. Get everyone to equip some decent Rifles, Mechguns or Handguns, while Forces attack with Foie and help with support and healing.

EXP GAINED

Normal	**2,400**
Hard	**6,000**
Very Hard	**12,000**

LEARNING JAPANESE

Meet people, make friends, then threaten to batter them. All in a month's learns.

Have you ever wanted to tell somebody on one of *PSO*'s Japanese ships that you're going to beat them to death, but lacked the necessary vocabulary to make your threat understood? Here's how to do it with passion and style. Alternatively, if you'd rather not upset anybody too much, you could try some of the gentle words of encouragement below. Good cop, bad cop. Bad cop, good cop. That's **NGC** all over. An iron fist in a velvet glove. We aim to please.



Rachel Ryan – our very own lady of mystery, Japanese scholar, and chronic *Phantasy Star Online* addict. All we know about her is that she lives in Essex. But doesn't have an Essex accent. Hmm.

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN...

Japanese: わいわい！

Pronunciation: **WA I WA I!**

Meaning: **Yay!**

A particularly immature cry of delight, this stereotypical phrase is seen often in games, used exclusively by children, token cute characters and giggly schoolgirls in sailor uniforms. Oh, and people pretending to be girls on online games.

Japanese: 殺してやる！

Hiragana: ころしてやる！

Reading: **KO RO SHI TE YA RU!**

Meaning: **I'll kill you!**

Aside from the more obvious swearwords, this phrase ranks as the one that I am most often asked how to say. For some reason. You can just say 'korosu' but that's boring. The 'te yaru' form humiliates the subject even further. Look out for this phrase in beat-'em-ups, along with the common variant 打っ殺してやる ('bukkoroshite yaru' – I'll beat you to death).

Japanese: レッツゴー!

Reading: **RE T TSU GO U!**

Meaning: **Let's go!**

Often uttered by voice actors pathetically trying to attempt an American accent in beat-'em-ups, this Japanese rendering of 'let's go' basically means the same as it does in English, except that in Japanese it is often a stereotypical thing for a foreigner to say at the beginning of a fight.

Japanese: 頑張れ！

Hiragana: がんばれ！

Reading: **GA N BA RE!**

Meaning: A catch-all term meaning 'hang in there', 'do your best' or 'go for it'. Well known now in the West thanks to the *Ganbare Goemon* games, but this is not just found in videogame titles, it's also a very common cry of encouragement. Another form of the verb appears in がんばって見ます ('ganbatte mimasu' – I'll try my best) which often doubles as something apologetic to say when you know your team-mates are going to be reviving you. A lot.

Japanese: しっかりして！

Reading: **SHI K KARI SHI TE!**

Meaning: Another word of encouragement, this one can also mean 'hang in there', or 'pull yourself together'. Unlike 'ganbare', it's used when you're flagging – ie, it's what mages in games often say when they are called upon to revive a character.

Japanese: 主人公

Hiragana: しゅじんこう

Reading: **SHU JI N KO U**

Meaning: The protagonist; the main character. Not necessarily the only character you can control in a game, but usually the most bland and stereotypical.

Japanese: 魔物

Hiragana: まもの

Reading: **MA MO NO**

Meaning: A monster, or demon. Usually referring to those found in RPGs, these are the variety which descend on the hero's village in the dead of night and burn it to the ground.

Japanese: 怪獣

Hiragana: かいじゅう

Reading: **KA I JU U**

Meaning: A large monster; a behemoth. The variety that spurn small villages, instead preferring to burn Tokyo down on a frequent basis.

Japanese: メモリーカード

Reading: **ME MO RI I KA A DO**

Meaning: **Memory card**

One that owners of Action Replay and Freeloader REALLY need to look out for, any reference to your memory card on loading a Japanese game, probably means you have accidentally left in a UK card and, no, you absolutely do not want to answer yes to the following:

Japanese: 初期化しますか？ はい/いいえ

Hiragana: しょきかしますか？はい/いいえ

Reading: **SHO KI KA SHI MA SU KA? HA I/I I E**

Meaning: **Format? Yes/No**

ALWAYS answer いいえ to this question, unless you are positive you want to erase all the saves on the card.

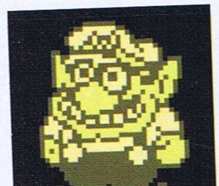


THE EVOLUTION OF... WARIO

Greed is good, but yellow suits, purple snouts and a taste for congealed nasal mucous are even better.

1 SUPER MARIO LAND 2

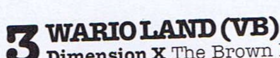
Humble beginnings



The instruction manual introduced Wario as an 'evil creep', which was a terrific start for Mario's purple-nosed childhood rival. The game also had Mario living alone in a huge castle while Wario (presumably) slept under railway bridges, eating moss and drinking his own urine.

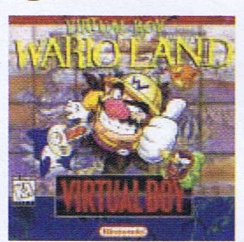
2 MARIO LAND 3: WARIO LAND

Fat chance After Captain Syrup and the Brown Sugar Pirates (which we're sure is a euphemism for something fairly revolting) stole a vast golden statue of Peach from her own back yard, Wario stepped in to recover the monstrous artefact and profit from the vain princess's ransom. While wearing a mohawk hairdo.



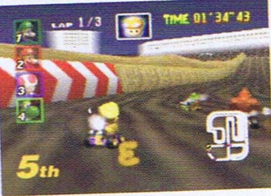
3 WARIO LAND (VB)

Dimension X The Brown Pirates were consigned to history for this one, but there was definitely something about the game that brought tears to the eyes. Namely the retina-scorching display of the Virtual Boy console, a machine designed to burn a Nintendo logo and some amusing insults from Hiroshi Yamauchi onto the user's frontal lobes.



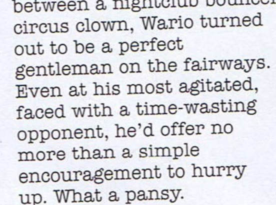
4 MARIO KART 64

I'm-a gonna ween! The power of the N64 brought speech to Wario's lips, granting true stardom to a character modelled on the purple-nosed winos who live under Shigeru Miyamoto's bed. Catchphrases include: 'Wah!', 'Wah!', and 'Waaaaaah!'



5 MARIO GOLF

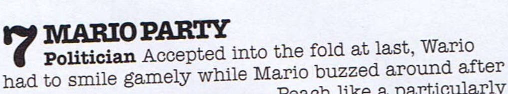
Fore Despite looking like an intimidating cross between a nightclub bouncer, a meths drinker and a circus clown, Wario turned out to be a perfect gentleman on the fairways. Even at his most agitated, faced with a time-wasting opponent, he'd offer no more than a simple encouragement to hurry up. What a pansy.





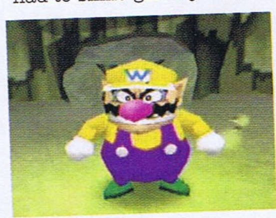
6 MARIO TENNIS

Oh, I say From one leisurely summer pastime to another, but Wazza's brutishness banishes all memories of the civilised golfing gent. To watch Wario hammer forehand after forehand directly into Mario's face, well... It's as if he knew he wouldn't get the chance to finish the job in Smash Bros.



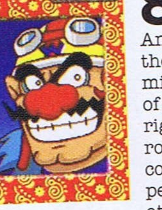
7 MARIO PARTY

Politician Accepted into the fold at last, Wario had to smile gamely while Mario buzzed around after Peach like a particularly juicy blowfly on a freshly laid dog egg. Wario played along with her twee board games, applauded like a true sport when he lost, and even ate some of her inexpertly cooked cake.



8 WARIO WARE

Mini adventure And the reward for those long, misunderstood years of trying to do the right thing – a starring role as head of his own corporation, a penthouse apartment atop a skyscraper emblazoned with a giant letter W, and all the cheap aftershave a man could drink.



WORTHLESS DRIVING GAMES, CRUSH HOUR-STYLE

1. **INSANE CLOWN POSSE RACING** Whoah, like, totally rad, dude. Twisted Metal – with insane clowns! And a posse.
2. **JACKASS ULTIMATE CAR COMBAT** Whoah, like, totally rad, dude. Twisted Metal – with midgets!
3. **BECKHAM'S FASHION RACE** Racing a million-pound note through the streets of Madrid, while wearing a skirt.
4. **PAPA ADOLF'S ÜBERCARS** Hilarity with Uncle Hitler and the gang, racing Volkswagens in the shape of spiky helmets.
5. **PREMIERSHIP KART-HORSE** Horse-drawn fun starring Alan Shearer, Martin Keown, Craig Short and Paul Ince.
6. **TIM HENMAN SPEEDWAY** Tennis chump turns moto-cross champ in an *Excitebike* rip-off with added land mines.
7. **ROBOT WARS EXTREME RACING** Well, they would make it if they had any sense.
8. **SUPER WESTLIFE KART** Payment for this one accepted only in pink pounds.
9. **PRAM-FACE BUGGY RACE** Only five minutes to giro time! Thrash that twin pushchair through Kwik Save.
10. **VIN DIESEL'S XXX GP** Relentlessly depressing mixture of Offspring songs, snowboard combat and *Mario Kart*. A hit!

1350

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Parasite Eve 2
Rayman
Resident Evil 2
Shadowman
Silent Hill
Theme Park World
Tomb Raider 2
Tomb Raider 5
World's S. Police Chases
Yu-Gi-Oh! F. Memories
Plus Many More...

GBA & GBC

Breath of Fire
Conkers Pocket Tales
Dragonball Z: Leg. Goku
Gekido: Kintaro's Rev.
Golden Sun
Golden Sun 2
GT Advance Champ.
Harry Potter C.of Secrets
Jurassic Park 3: PBuilder
L. of Zelda: Link to Past
Lord of Rings Two Towers
Lord of Rings: Fel. of Ring
Mortal Kombat Advance
Pokemon Blue
Pokemon Crystal
Pokemon Gold
Pokemon Red
Pokemon Ruby
Pokemon Sapphire
Pokemon Silver
Pokemon Yellow
Simpsons: T'house Horror
Sonic Advance
Spiderman The Movie
Tony Hawk's 2
Turok: Evolution
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Dark Duel St.
Yu-Gi-Oh!: World Edition
Zelda: A Link to the Past
Zelda: Links Awake. DX
Zelda: Oracle of Ages
Plus Many More...

N64

Banjo Kazooie
Goldeneye
Mario Tennis
Mortal Kombat: Sub Zero
Pokemon Snap
Quake 64
Star Wars: Racer
The World is not Enough
Zelda: Majora's Mask
Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Plus Many More...

PC

Age of Mythology
Age of Sail 2
Airport Tycoon
Atlantis 3: New World
Broken Sword
C&C: Generals
Cutthroats
Die Hard Nakatomi Plaza
Dune 2000
Enter the Matrix
Gore
Grand T Auto: Vice City
Grand Theft Auto
I. Jones: Emperor's Tomb
Madden NFL 2002
Medal of Honor: All. Ass.
Medieval T.War: Viking I.
Prisoner of War
Red Alert 2
Roller Coaster Tycoon
S. Trek: Deep Space 9
Sim City 3000
Sims
Sims Livin' It Up
Sims: Superstar
Sims: Unleashed
Spiderman The Movie
Star Wars: Jedi Knight 2
Starships Unlimited
The Esc. from Monkey I.
Titanic: Adv. Out of Time
Tomb Raider 3
Tropico 2: Pirate's Cove
Warcraft 3: R. of Chaos
Plus Many More...

X-BOX

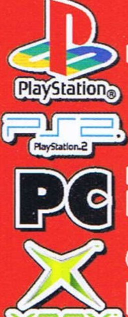
Blade 2
Blinx: The Time Sweeper
BloodRayne
BMX XXX
Buffy The Vampire Slayer
Champ. Manager 2001
Champ. Manager 2002
Conflict: Desert Storm
Dead or Alive Volleyball
Dead to Rights
Enter the Matrix
FIFA 2003
Halo
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Hulk
I. Jones: Emp's Tomb
Jedi Knight 2
Jet Set Radio Future
Matrix (Enter the)
Moto GP2: U.R.T.
Need for Speed H.Purs.2
Phantasy Star Online
Project Gotham Racing
Red Faction 2
Return to C. Wolfenstein
Rocky
Sega GT 2002
Splinter Cell
Star Wars: Jedi Knight 2
The Hulk
Tiger Woods Golf 2003
ToeJam & Earl 3
Turok: Evolution
Wakeboarding Unleash.
Plus Many More...

PS2

Age of Empires 2
Army Men RTS
Blade 2
Blood Omen 2
BloodRayne
Burnout 2 Point of Impact
C.Bandicoot: W.of Cortex
Dark Angel (J.Cameron)
Dark Cloud
Def Jam Vendetta
Devil May Cry
Devil May Cry 2
Dragonball Z: Budokai
Dynasty Warriors 3 XL
Enter the Matrix
Escape Monkey Island
FIFA 2003
Final Fantasy 10
Getaway
Gran Turismo 3
Grand T Auto: Vice City
Grand Theft Auto 3
Harry Potter C.of Secrets
Headhunter
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Hulk
James Bond: Nightfire
Jurassic Park Op Genesis
Kingdom Hearts
LMA Manager 2003
Lord of Rings Two Towers
Lord of Rings: Fel. of Ring
Matrix (Enter the)
Max Payne
Medal of Honor Frontline
Metal Gear Solid 2
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sub.
Midnight Club
Midnight Club 2
Minority Report
Mort.Kombat: Deadly All.
Premier Manager 2002
Primal
Pro Evolution Soccer 2
Ratchet and Clank
Red Faction
Res.Evil: Code Veronica X
Return to C. Wolfenstein
Rocky
Shadow Hearts
Silent Hill 2
Silent Hill 3
Sims
Smackdown! 3: J. Bring It
Smackdown! 4: Shut Y.M.
SOCOM: US Navy Seals
Spiderman The Movie
Splinter Cell
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven
Terminator: Dawn of Fate
The Getaway
The Matrix
The Simpsons: Road Rage
The Sims
The Thing
Tony Hawk's 4
US Navy Seals (SOCOM)
Vice City, G.T.A.
Virtua Tennis 2
WWE Crush Hour
WWE Smackdown! S.Y.M.
X-Men 2: Wolverine's Rev.
Plus Many More...

GAME CUBE

A = 01
A Goddess Reborn
Ace Golf
Agent Under Fire
Aggressive Inline
American Pro Trucker
Animal Crossing
ATV Quad Racing 2
B = 02
Baldur's Gate: Dark All.
Batman Vengeance
Batman: Dark Tomorrow
Battle Houshin
Battle, Sonic Adventure 2
Battlecry, Robotech
Beach Bandits, R. Power
Beach Spikers
Big Air Freestyle
Black and Bruised
Blood Omen 2
BloodRayne
Bloody Roar: Primal Fury
Blue Storm - Wave Race
BMX XXX
Bomberman Generation
Bond 007: Nightfire
Bond: Agent Under Fire
Bounty Hunter: Star Wars
Burnout
Burnout 2 Point of Impact
C = 03
Capcom vs. SNK: EO
Casper: Spirit Dimensions
Cel Damage
Chamber of Secrets
Clone Wars - Star Wars
Combat Zones - Top Gun
Conflict: Desert Storm
Crash Bandicoot
Crazy Taxi
Crush Hour (WWE)
D = 04
Dakar 2
Dark Alliance (B's Gate)
Dark Legacy
Dark Tomorrow - Batman
Dave Mirra BMX 2
Dead to Rights
Deadly Alliance
Def Jam Vendetta
Defender
Desert Storm (Conflict)
Destroy All Monsters
Die Hard: Vendetta
Dinosaur Planet (Starfox)
Disney Sports Football
Disney's Magical Mirror
Donald Duck: Quack Att.
Doshin the Giant
Dr. Muto
Driven
E = 05
Eggo Mania
Eighteen Wheeler
End Game
Enter the Dragonfly
Enter the Matrix
ESPN Int.Winter Sports'02
Eternal Darkness
Evolution (Turok)
Evolution Skateboarding
Extra Large - Shrek
Extreme G 3
F = 06
F1 2002
Fantasy Star Online 1 & 2
Fellowship Of The Ring
FIFA 2002
FIFA 2003
Fifa World Cup 2002
Fighting Live
Fire Blade
Fox McCloud StarFox Adv
Freekstyle
Freeride - Tarzan
Frontline (M. of Honor)
G = 07
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy
Ghost Recon
Goddess Reborn
Godzilla: D. all Monsters
Grand Heat - Burnout
Groove Adventure Rave
H = 08
Harry Potter C.of Secrets
Hoodlum Havoc
Hot Pursuit 2
Hot Wheels: Velocity X
Hulk
I = 09
Ikaruga
Incredible Hulk
Int. Superstar Soccer 2
Int. Winter Sports 2002
J = 10
J.Bond: Agent Under Fire
J.McGrath's S'cross World
James Bond: Nightfire
Jedi Knight 2
K = 11
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer
Kinnuku Man 2-Yo
L = 12
L. of Kain: Blood Omen 2
L.of Zelda: Master Quest
Leg. of Zelda: O. of Time
Leg. of Zelda: W. Waker
Legends of Wrestling
Legends of Wrestling 2
Lord of Rings Two Towers
Lord of Rings: Fel. of Ring
Lost Kingdoms
Lost Kingdoms II: Rune
Luigi's Mansion
M = 13
Madden NFL 2002
Magical Mirror
Mario Party 4
Mario Sunshine
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2
Matrix (Enter the)
Medal of Honor Frontline
Men In Black 2 Alien Esc.
Metroid Prime
Micro Machines
Minority Report
Monsters Inc. Scr. Arena
Mort.Kombat: Deadly All.
MX Superfly
Mystic Heroes
N = 14
NASCAR Thunder 2003
NBA 2K2
NBA 2K3
NBA Courtside 2002
NBA Live 2003
NBA Street
NBA Street Volume 2
Need for Speed H.Purs.2
Nemesis (Resident Evil 3)
Next Dimension: X-Men
NFL Blitz 2002
NFL Q'back Club 2002
NHL 2003
NHL Hitz 2002
Night of 100 Frights
Nightfire
O = 15
Ocarina of Time: Master
Ocarina Of Time: Zelda
OO7 Agent Under Fire
OO7 Nightfire
Outlaw Golf
P = 16
Pac-Man World 2
Paris-Dakar Rally 2
Phantasy Star Online
Pikmin
Point of Impact
Primal Fury - Bloody Roar
Q = 17
Quack Attack
Quad Power Racing 2
R = 18
Rayman 3
Reckless: Yakuza Missions
Red Card Soccer 2003
Red Faction 2
Reign Of Fire
Resident Evil
Resident Evil 2
Resident Evil 3
Resident Evil Zero
Rev. of Flying Dutchman
Rise of the Akkadian
Robotech: Battlecry
Rocket Power Bch.Bandits
Rocky
Rogue Leader
Rune - Lost Kingdoms
Rune - Lost Kingdoms 2
S = 19
Sanity's Requiem
Scooby Doo: 100 Frights
Scorpion King
Scream Arena Monst. Inc
Sega Soccer Slam
Shrek: Extra Large
Simpsons: Road Rage
Sims
Skies of Arcadia Legends
Smugglers Run 2: Warz.
Sonic Adventure 2 Battle
Sonic Mega Collection
Spiderman The Movie
Spirit Dimensions
Splinter Cell
SpongeBob S'Pants: RFD
Spy Hunter
Spyro: Ent.the Dragonfly
SSX Tricky
Star Wars: Bounty Hunter
Star Wars: Clone Wars
Star Wars: Jedi Knight 2
Star Wars: Rogue Leader
Starfox Adventures
Sum of All Fears
Summoner Goddess Reb.
Super Mario Sunshine
Super Monkey Ball
Super Monkey Ball 2
Super Smash Bros Melee
Superman: Apokolips
Swingerz Golf
T = 20
Tarzan Freeride
Tarzan Untamed
The Fellowship Of Ring
The Hulk
The L. of Zelda: W.Waker
The L.of Zelda: M. Quest
The L.of Zelda: Oc. Time
The Matrix
The Scorpion King
The Simpsons: Road Rage
The Sims
The Two Towers
Theme Park Adventure
Throwdown - UFC
Tiger Woods Golf 2003
Time Splitters 2
Tom Clancy: Ghost Recon
Tom Clancy: Sum of Fear
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell
Tony Hawk's 3
Tony Hawk's 4
Top Gun: Combat Zones
Turok: Evolution
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger
U = 21
Ult.F.Champ: Throwdown
Ultimate Muscle
Universal Studios Adv.
V = 22
Velocity X - Hot Wheels
Vendetta: Die Hard
Vexx
Virtua Striker 3: V. 2002
W = 23
Warzone, Smuggler's Run
Wave Race: Blue Storm
Wind Waker
Wolverine's Revenge
World Cup 2002
Worms Blast
Wrath of Cortex
Wreckless: Yakuza Miss.
WWE Crush Hour
WWE Wrestlemania X8
X = 24
X-Men 2: Wolverine's Rev.
X-Men: Next Dimension
Z = 26
Zapper
Zelda: Master Quest
Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Zelda: Wind Waker
Zoocube
0-9 = 27
007 Agent Under Fire
007 Nightfire
18 Wheeler
2002 FIFA World Cup
Plus Many More...













NINTENDO 64

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